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ANTIQUITIES AT THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Cornelius Vermeule

Interviewed by Richard Cándida Smith and Claire L. Lyons

Art History Oral Documentation Project

Compiled under the auspices
of the
Getty Research Institute for the History of
Art and the Humanities

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Frontispiece: Cornelius Vermeule. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

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Richard Cándida Smith, Associate Professor of History at the University of Michigan, and Dr. Claire L. Lyons, Curator in Collection Development and Curatorial Projects at the Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities interviewed Cornelius Vermeule in his office at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Occasionally present was John J. Herrmann, Jr., current Curator of Classical Art. A total of 4.85 hours were recorded. The transcript was edited by Katherine P. Smith.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Cornelius C. Vermeule III

Born August 10, 1925, Orange, New Jersey

Married Emily Dickinson Townsend 1957; two children

Education:

Harvard University, M.A., 1951

University of London, Ph.D., 1953

Professional Career:

1953-'55	Instructor in Fine Arts, then Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan
1955-'57	Assistant Professor, Classical Archaeology, Bryn Mawr College
1956-'96	Curator of Classical Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
1996	Curator Emeritus

Appointments and Honors:

1960-'61	Visiting Professor of Fine Arts, Wellesley College
1961-'64	Lecturer in Fine Arts, Smith College
1965-'68	Lecturer in Fine Arts, then Adjunct Professor of Fine Arts, Boston University
1968, '71, '74, 1976-'77	Lecturer in Fine Arts, Harvard University
1969-'70,	Visiting Professor, Yale University
1972-'73	Acting Director, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
1975-'76	Thomas Spencer Jerome Lecturer, University of Michigan
1993	Visiting Professor, University of Aberdeen
1978-	Visiting Professor, Boston College
1965-'71	Named Associate Curator of Coins, Massachusetts Historical Society
1971	Curator of Coins, Massachusetts Historical Society
1980-'84	President, International Committee to Preserve the Catacombs of Italy
1984-	Chairman of the Board, International Committee to Preserve the Catacombs of Italy

Cassiano Dal Pozzo Catalogue Committee
Trustee, Cardinal Spellman Museum

- 1951-'53 Fulbright fellow
1968 Guggenheim fellow
1976 From Boston College, the R  le Medal Commemorating the
 United States Bicentennial for contributions to the understanding of
 the arts in America.
1995 Doctor of Humane Letters degree presented by Boston College

Additional Fellowships and Memberships:

Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences
Fellow, Royal Numismatic Society
Fellow, Society of Antiquaries, London
Lifetime fellow, American Numismatic Society
Life member, Archaeological Institute of America
Life member, College Art Association
Life member, Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies
Life member, Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies
Member, German Archaeological Institute
Member, Holland Society, New York
Member, Colonial Lords of Manors in America

Publications :

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SESSION ONE: 10 NOVEMBER, 1995

[Tape I, Side One]

SMITH: The question we always start with is fairly straightforward: When and where were you born?

VERMEULE: I was born, or landed, in 1925 on the street that is most famous now in America for having been the venue of *Portnoy's Complaint*: Springfield Avenue in Newark. Except I think I was registered as born in the Orange Memorial Hospital, in Orange, New Jersey.

SMITH: Could you tell us a little bit about your parents and what their backgrounds were.

VERMEULE: Well, in the 1930s sewage in towns was a great business, and my father [Cornelius C. Vermeule, Jr.], my uncle, and my grandfather were all [involved in that], but they also built other things. They built four tracks of the New York Central Railroad from Albany to Schenectady, and then when railroads died or were in a terminal state, they took up two of the tracks.

My mother [Catherine S. C. Vermeule] came from a tobacco family with roots in Asia Minor. That's why I enjoy speaking with the Turkophones.

SMITH: Did you go to Turkey as a child?

VERMEULE: Oh yes.

SMITH: And Greece, as well?

VERMEULE: Greece, yes, but mainly to Turkey. The founder of modern Turkey patted me on the head and said I was a *joli garçon*, but then Carlos Picon at the Metropolitan Museum tells me that Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, made a quick and sudden trip to Puerto Rico of all places, because he wanted to bond with Puerto Rican intelligentsia, and one of the intelligentsia was Carlos's grandfather, who was quite a famous poet and literatus, and he too was patted on the head and called a *joli garçon*. I may have even been treated to the Turkish version, but I think Ataturk was pretty international; I think he preferred French.

SMITH: Did you travel much as a child? Would you go every year to Europe?

VERMEULE: Yes, the family tobacco business was located all over the world. I went to Japan because the Japanese were and I think still are the greatest addicts in the world when it comes to tobacco. There's "me mum" [showing photograph], who's still alive at a hundred and two. [She died January 12, 1996.] At the age of about forty-five she went cold turkey on the filthy weed. She chain smoked, and she'd get on her high horse because Emily [Townsend Vermeule] virtually chain smokes. So when we'd have one of these episodes I'd say, "Look, ma, if it weren't for the filthy weed you'd be on welfare instead of living in a great big house in northern New Jersey!"

Can I talk about Mr. [J. P.] Getty?

SMITH: Yes.

VERMEULE: We used to go to lunch together when I was working at the [Sir John] Soane Museum. He'd insist that we eat in a little greasy spoon that was in the passageway from Holborn to Kingsway, where truckers sometimes ate. I don't think you could spend more than about five shillings on a sumptuous meal, including a beverage. I greatly admired Getty, but when it came time to pay the bill, here was I, a poor graduate student, and he was not the fastest mouse in Mexico reaching for that check!

SMITH: So this was when you were in London in the early fifties?

VERMEULE: Yes.

SMITH: I noted in that article that you started collecting coins when you were nine years old.

VERMEULE: I think that was in 1934. My mother and I went into a general antique shop in Cambridge, England, and I bought two coins, one of which was Sestertius of Otho, whom we know never had any bronze or copper coins, but it looked good and I loved it. The other one was a genuine coin of one of the third-century emperors, and that sort of started it off. But I had collected American coins before that.

SMITH: Did you have an interest in antiquities at this time as well?

VERMEULE: Primarily in coins. The interest in antiquities came after I left another career, which was in far eastern languages and linguistics—Japanese and Chinese. Of course I took a mandatory course on the art of the Far East with Professor

[Benjamin] Rowland at Harvard, but then in 1950—Bang!—down came the iron curtain in China, and I said to myself, "I'm not going to spend the rest of my life studying the civilization of a people I may never be able to visit." Well, everything worked out all right and one could go there after twenty years or something, but I switched to Greek and Roman archaeology, primarily under the influence of Professor [George] Hanfmann at Harvard, who snaked me out of Harvard Business School, where I had just completed two years. I was off to be a stockbroker on Wall Street with one of the old-line companies, and Hanfmann came along and so charmed me with the glories of ancient art and archaeology that we had a family conference and my mother and her brother said, "Why don't you do what you want to do? You don't have to be a stockbroker."

SMITH: Was your father still alive at this point?

VERMEULE: No. He died in World War II.

LYONS: Had you studied Greek and Latin at school?

VERMEULE: Yes, that was a requirement. They didn't offer Greek where I went, but there was a wonderful teacher, Mr. [Herbert] Howe, who tutored us in Greek. He later went on to be a professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Of course we got big doses of Latin.

LYONS: Which school was this?

VERMEULE: This was Pomfret School, in Pomfret, Connecticut.

SMITH: That was a boarding school?

VERMEULE: Oh, it sure was. And there were no really good fast highways down through the middle of Connecticut in those days, so you either went from Grand Central on the train, or your family drove you up to school over these winding little back roads. You had a feeling of isolation.

SMITH: Was your family home in New York City or in New Jersey?

VERMEULE: Both.

SMITH: So you had an apartment in New York?

VERMEULE: Right: 25 East Eighty-third Street.

SMITH: So it was near the Metropolitan Museum. Did you go there a lot as a child?

VERMEULE: Oh yes. And then I worked at Stacks, the coin dealers. They were on West Forty-sixth Street in those days.

SMITH: What was it about coins that so attracted you?

VERMEULE: History I think. I wrote a book on American coins, *Numismatic Art in America*[*: Aesthetics of the United States Coinage*]. I've always said that American coins are pretty dull, but with Roman coins you've got sometimes up to fifteen hundred different types for one emperor, like the Emperor Hadrian, so the coins were changing almost every few days; it was a great dose of history.

SMITH: So you were interested in why the changes [took place], and placing the coins in the right sequence?

VERMEULE: Oh yes, yes. Of course that was all being done by the people at the British Museum, so I mainly got to eventually write about the art of the coins—Roman numismatic art.

SMITH: Did you know the coin specialists at the Metropolitan?

VERMEULE: There weren't any. My predecessor here, Lacey Davis Caskey, who was the father of Jack Caskey, later director of the American School [of Classical Studies] in Athens, was interested in coins, and we had an elderly lady named Agnes Baldwin Brett, who did the big catalog of our coins. Then we had a benefactor here named Theodora Wilbour, whose family money came from the Boss Tweed scandal in New York. Her father, Charles Edward Wilbour had to take off because he knew where all the bodies were buried, and so he bought himself a big yacht and spent the rest of his life cruising up and down the Nile, which gave his two daughters, Theodora and Zoë, a great appreciation of ancient art, and particularly coins. But the Metropolitan, to my knowledge, didn't have a coin specialist. I don't want to do them a disrespect, because Miss [Gisela M. A.] Richter used coins in her writing, and Miss Marjorie Milne knew coins, but generally they went up to the American Numismatic Society at Broadway and 156th Street.

SMITH: Which you must have gone up to yourself.

VERMEULE: Oh, many times.

SMITH: So you knew the people there?

VERMEULE: Yes, and I knew the people in Princeton. There was the great Roman historian, David Magie, at Princeton, who was interested in coins. I had an uncle who taught art and architecture at Princeton when he wasn't running the family tobacco business. I don't know how he could manage to do both, but when he retired he devoted himself full time to restoration in Newport, Rhode Island. Just before the Depression, at the height of the boom in 1929, they sold the noxious part of the business, the cigarettes, to a man named F. F. Duke, in Durham, North Carolina, but they kept the cigar part of the business. I used to be able to hand out boxes of Dutch Masters cigars to all my friends. Finally we sold that to Gulf and Western.

SMITH: What was the role of culture in your family? Was there a lot of interest in the fine arts, in music, and literature?

VERMEULE: More in genealogy. My grandfather was a genealogist; he was interested in the Dutch in colonial America, and the Dutch in nineteenth-century America. I used to get big doses of what the family had done in the American Revolution and particularly Adrian Vermeule, after whom my son, Cornelius Adrian is named. Adrian Vermeule had been caught by the British carrying dispatches in Plainfield, New Jersey, and was put on board one of those prison boats in New Jersey harbor, and of course he died. This made my grandfather, who was the senator from New Jersey for a brief time—I think he filled senator [Frederick Theodore] Frelinghuysen's unexpired term or something like that—very, very hostile to the Brits,

and in 1922, when the Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII, came on a triumphant post World War I tour to America, my grandfather refused to stand up when they played "God Save the King." Just like the Irish. I had none of these hangups.

SMITH: What were your favorite subjects at Pomfret?

VERMEULE: History and Latin. I managed the crew. I was no great athlete, but I think I was cox the first year on the crew, but then I immediately grew too big to be a cox, so I went out for manager. I didn't care for mathematics. Did I tell you my story about biology? Sumner Williams, whose father was a distinguished partner at the [Thomas A.] Edison Company, and I were in the same class at Pomfret, and we were dissecting frogs in biology. Sumner went "Ha! Ha!" and he pressed his thumb right down on the middle of my frog, and the formaldehyde came up all over my face. I just made it to the laboratory door. Skinned cats I couldn't stand, since my nickname is Keddy and there are pictures of cats all around. *Kedi* is Turkish for cat. So those were subjects I didn't care for. But history . . . American history, anybody's history.

SMITH: Of any time period?

VERMEULE: I suppose with American history it's from the Revolution on, because I didn't get much involved in New Amsterdam, though my grandfather did. He loved to speak about various members of the family. The first Vermeule, and I used to kid everybody about this, was the first person to bring the curse of civil service to New Amsterdam; he was the administrator of Haarlem, and it's been all downhill ever

since.

SMITH: Let's see, when you graduated the country must already have been at war?

VERMEULE: Yes, 1943. I got in a summer here at Harvard as a seventeen-year-old freshperson, turning eighteen in August of 1943. I was able to get in a whole half year of intensive Japanese at Harvard, which I already had a handle on anyway.

SMITH: Oh, from high school?

VERMEULE: From childhood travels. I even went to a Japanese school briefly. We used to have to wear those little suits with little caps. We had to stand up and sing what were then the equivalent of the patriotic German songs, like "Die Wacht am Rhein." We had to sing songs that spoke very much of Japanese expansiveness in the 1930s. So I got in a whole term of credit and then got sent to the army language school which was then located at the law quad at the University of Michigan.

The whole law quad was taken over for the army language school. I don't know where the lawyers went in 1943. I think I told you when we talked before, if I know nothing else in life, I know every street, every alley in Ann Arbor, because we walked all of them. We studied in the morning and we walked in the afternoon.

SMITH: Oh, the drill?

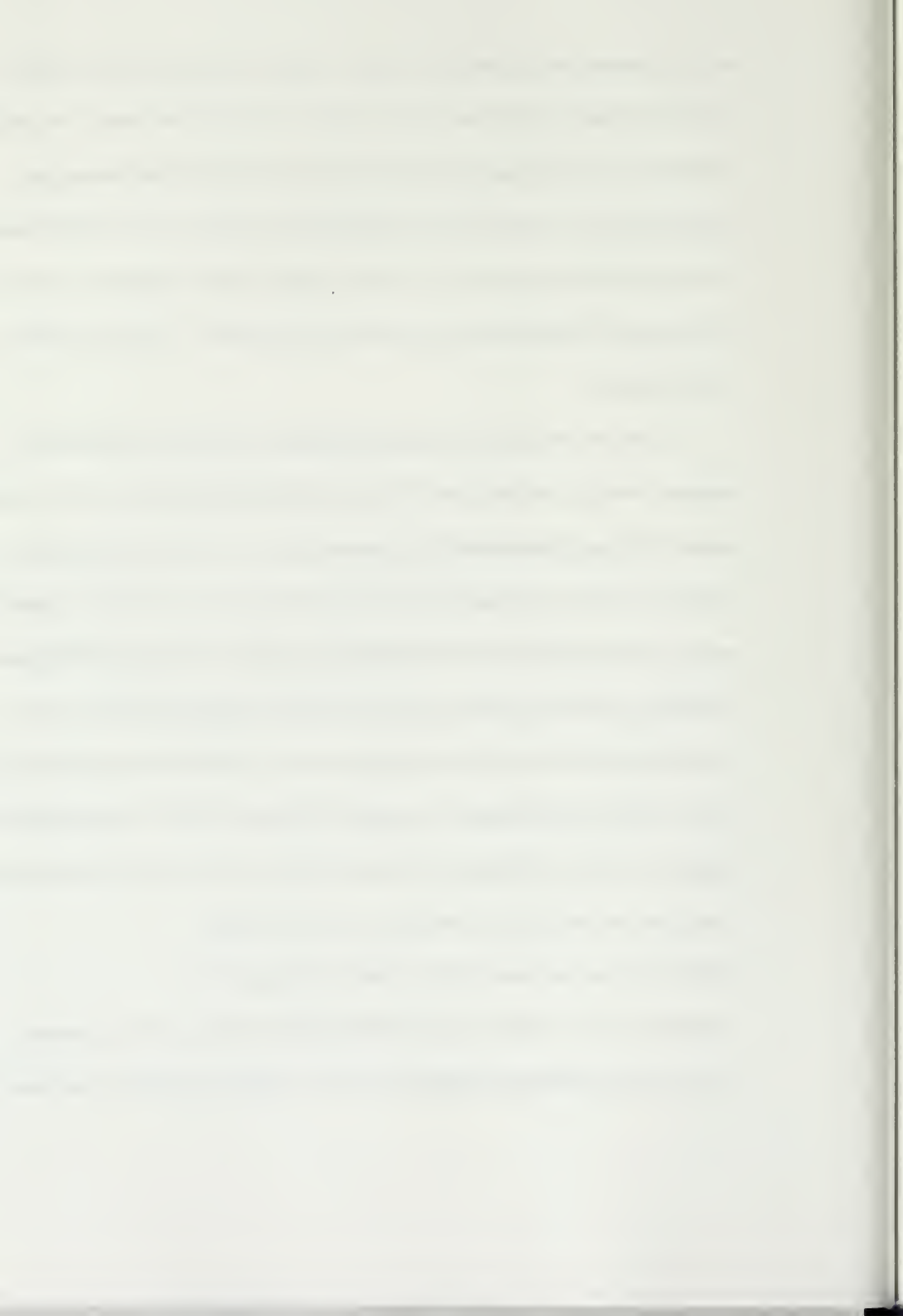
VERMEULE: Yes, the drill. And you know how hot it gets in Ann Arbor in the summertime, humid with the Huron river, the water down in that basin. So then our outfit was sent to basic training at Fort McClellan in Anniston, Alabama, and that was

sort of traumatic, because the first of Hitler's Afrika Korps were being brought to Anniston, Alabama as prisoners of war, and they were spared no luxury. We walked and they rode around, these great big Nordic gods, and then in the evening they appeared to get out among the not unreceptive local people, and we could all hear them as we were cooped up in our barracks, singing, "Barbara, Barbara, kommt mit mir nach Afrika" and other sets, and of course "Lili Marlene"—endless maudlin verses of "Lili Marlene."

Then we were off to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, where the advanced army language school for Japanese was. We got to monitor Tokyo Rose and other such people on the long distance electronic communication. It would be relayed from Hawaii and we'd have to make reports on what the Japanese were saying. Finally we got to go to the South Pacific, and eventually up to Japan—through the Philippines, to Okinawa. Of course having had all this wonderful training invested in us, we weren't allowed to come home for eighteen months. We had to stay there from 1945 to 1947. I had it cushy because I was right in downtown Tokyo, in the old Japanese shipping line building which was turned into a billet, but some of my buddies drew Korea, and that was no day at the beach, as you can imagine.

SMITH: So you were part of the occupation authority, then?

VERMEULE: Yes, I was in what's called the Kinetsu Butai, the civil censorship. I got to run the Yokohama Post Office for a while, which was good for a guy who was



interested in stamps as well as coins.

SMITH: You were all of twenty-two?

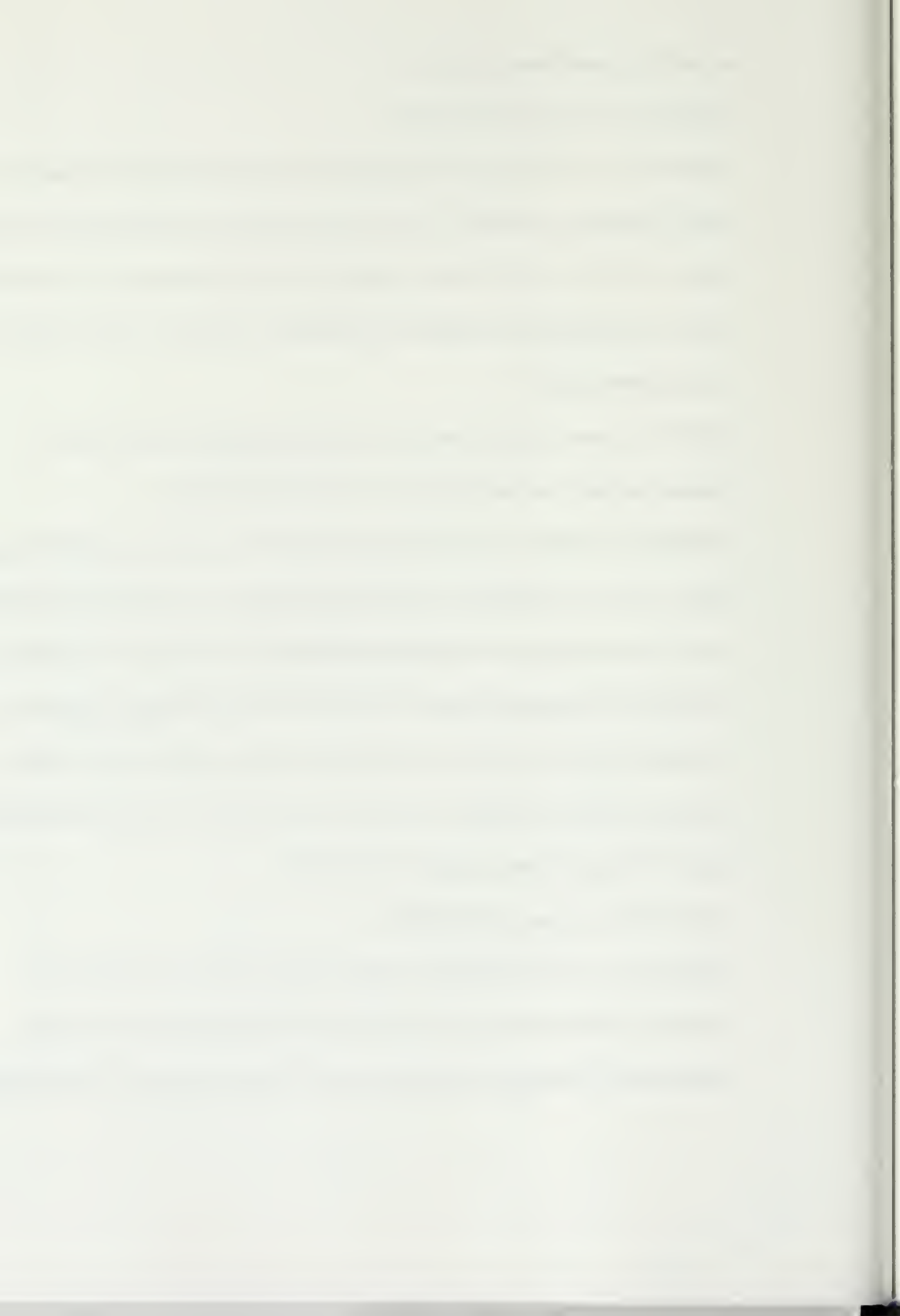
VERMEULE: Yes. They gave responsibility to kids in those days. We had to open random letters and censor them. We had teams of censors, and the Japanese were happy to work for the Allies because they knew it was harmless work, just opening letters from grandma in Los Angeles to grandson in Yokohama. As I say, this went on for eighteen months.

SMITH: Of course I noticed you wrote a book on Japanese coins [*Japanese Coinage*]; in fact it was your first book. How did that develop?

VERMEULE: Well, it was with a friend, Norman Jacobs, who was another language officer, a year or so ahead of me. He was an agronomist, an agricultural specialist, and had studied with some of those great economists of World War II. Afterwards, we both started collecting Japanese coins because this was the logical thing to do. We made friends with a gentleman in the Bank of Tokyo, and he helped us with our collection, and then we decided to do a book. Now there are of course many books [on that subject], but ours was the first in the field.

SMITH: How did you get it published?

VERMEULE: Stacks in New York, where I had worked in my Pomfret days, published it, and did a very good job. By then I think they had moved to Fifty-seventh Street, and right up the street from them was the Japan Club, because this



was about 1947, and they got somebody in the Japan Club to do all the hieroglyphs, because I was still in Japan or something.

SMITH: So then you returned to go back to Harvard, when your muster ended. I did want to ask you why you chose Harvard over another school.

VERMEULE: A very astute question, and it shows what these things are based on: hay fever, bad hay fever. All my family had gone to Princeton. My grandfather had gone to Rutgers, my other grandfather to Princeton, my mother to Vassar. My grandmother also went to Vassar. They came from Philadelphia, and I don't mean the City of Brotherly Love, I mean the city in Asia Minor, which is one of the cities of Saint Paul. I just had awful hay fever living in New Jersey; they used to have to take me away from that scene for about a month of every year, and since I was going to a college in the summer, if I had gone to Princeton I would have been wiped out.

SMITH: So you had no family connections to Harvard?

VERMEULE: I had one uncle [by marriage] who had gone there.

SMITH: And your major at Harvard was?

VERMEULE: Japanese and Chinese.

SMITH: So when you got your B.A. it was in Japanese and Chinese literature, or language?

VERMEULE: Language and literature, both.

SMITH: You said you took an art history course in Asian art with Benjamin

Rowland?

VERMEULE: Yes, with Benjamin Rowland, and it was quite inspiring. His widow Lucy is the trustee chair of our visitors committee to this department, so I see a lot of the Rowland children and her. I think I managed to slip away and take a couple of archaeology courses, but it wasn't really till graduate school. There were too many requirements to fill.

SMITH: Could you describe Rowland's course a little bit, how he approached the program?

VERMEULE: He had a dry sense of humor, and he approached it pretty much from the historical point of view. Of course, the greatest Far Eastern professor I took a course with was the white Russian, Sergei Elisseff, and there was Edwin O.

Reischauer, who later became our ambassador to Japan. He married a Japanese princess as his second wife. They were more straight language and straight literature.

But Ben's course was just a plain delight, and we became good friends. He'd say, "What do you know about Turkish folklore, Cornelius?" I said, "Well, when you come to the door of the loo don't hold it open and invite the Turk to go in first; it's the biggest insult you could possibly do. You stride manfully into the loo ahead of the Turk." Things like that. It gave us a good chuckle.

SMITH: Did you take any other art history classes at that time?

VERMEULE: I don't think I did.

SMITH: Nothing from Chandler Post?

VERMEULE: Oh yes, yes, I audited Chandler Post's course. Or did I take it? Yes, yes, I did. Oh, and Leonard Opdycke too. They said of Leonard Opdycke, "Drop your pencil and you miss a century;" he went so fast. Yes, and Fred[erick] B. Deknatel. I took a course in nineteenth century . . . but this was once I got into graduate school. Oh yes, I forgot about those.

SMITH: So then your M.A. is in what field? Is that Japanese as well?

VERMEULE: No, that's in fine arts. And then my Ph.D. is in classical archaeology and art.

SMITH: So what made you decide to go from Japanese language into the fine art program?

VERMEULE: Well, it was my interest in the Greek and Roman world, and also the feeling that I could never go to China, as I said. I could go to Japan and I could go to the Philippines, and I'd even had a nice big dose of New Guinea.

SMITH: Did you take the museum course?

VERMEULE: Yes, I did. I took the second version of it, with John Coolidge, Cocky [Charles] Kuhn, and who was the third one? Jakob Rosenberg.

SMITH: Could you describe that a little bit, how they organized it?

VERMEULE: Well, it was hands on, and it was in the tradition of Paul Sachs. It was anecdotal, and you learned by experiencing what they had learned. John

Coolidge was the most organized one; he took us on field trips to other museums. He just died last summer. Jakob Rosenberg gave us connoisseurship: "Ze connoisseurship is quality. You must remember, it is always quality." I forget what we got from Professor Kuhn. Oh, I worked on the German medals for Professor Kuhn, because he was also director of the Busch-Reisinger Museum, so I found a way to twist my numismatic instincts.

SMITH: As I recall, the way Coolidge organized the class would be to put several objects on the table, one of which would be a fake, and you were to determine which one was the fake. Does that ring a bell?

VERMEULE: Yes, oh it sure does. One of his great things was he'd send us out to [purchase objects]. We'd have \$100 in the museum budget to spend. If there were ten of us, that was \$1000 and we could go anywhere in the world and find an *objet d'art* for \$100 a piece or less and bring it to the Fogg [Art Museum]. Of course in those days there was this wonderful institution known as Postars, which was in Brighton, just across the Charles River from the cemeteries of Cambridge and Watertown, and you'd go to Mr. Postar, and say, "Mr. Postar, please can I throw myself on your mercy? What have you got for a hundred dollars that John Coolidge would like?" He'd inevitably come up with something.

SMITH: Do you remember what you presented to that class?

VERMEULE: I think it was a bust of George Washington by [Jean Antoine]

Houdon. Whether it was an actual Houdon or whether it was like Horatio Greenough [a young sculptor's copy], I don't know, but it was a true classical piece.

SMITH: Did you feel that that course adequately prepared you for your position here?

VERMEULE: Absolutely. It was wonderful because it was not only what you learned but the people you met who would come and lecture in the course, people like Francis Henry Taylor, who had then retired from the Met and was back in Worcester. And Sherman Lee, who was in Cleveland. And our own trustee's father, Charles Cunningham, Jr., who was then at the Art Institute of Chicago and later went to the Sterling and Francine Clark Museum. Of course we had fabulous ladies. There was a Miss [Louisa] Dresser from Worcester who had forgotten more about American primitive portraits and furniture than any of us will ever know. And a gentleman who was a refugee from Hitler's Germany, who came to Providence. I can't remember his name but he was very good. We had a well rounded spectrum of people who had varying experiences.

SMITH: You suggested that it was George Hanfmann who pushed you in the direction of studying classical art.

VERMEULE: Yes, he was a very forceful person. He didn't just push me, he grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and said, "This is silliness that you should go working on Wall Street." Actually, just about the time I started working on Wall

Street there was a big strike and the stevedores were sent to picket the stock exchange. I thought this was déclassé to have to fight my way through a lot of tough stevedores with those baling hooks around their waists every time I went into the stock exchange. Not that I have anything against stevedores, I much admire them. We used to use one downtown on Bromfield Street where the coin dealers are, to collect bad debts. Mr. Luigi Spinelli was his name. He'd come in, and if you didn't pay up quickly he took his baling hook off his waist and went like that down on the counter of the coin dealer.

SMITH: What led you then to decide to go to the University of London to do your Ph.D. work?

VERMEULE: Frankly, I wanted to escape from Harvard because they were dragging the process out too long. I had already given quite a few years of my life to Japanese and Chinese in the military, so I just wanted to get the process over. I was guaranteed a Ph.D. in two years and our great curator of paintings, W. G. Constable, got me a job cataloging the Soane Museum. So I did that, and then went off and cataloged the [Cassiano] dal Pozzo-[Alessandro] Albani drawings at Windsor. I was running like a thief, as they say.

SMITH: Did you know John Summerson while you were at the Soane?

VERMEULE: I worked right behind him. And Dorothy Stroud. I worked in a little room right behind them for two years.

SMITH: Did they have anything to teach you that was of relevance to what you were going to be doing here, do you think?

VERMEULE: They had unbounded admiration for the first of their circle to get his knighthood, Sir Anthony Blunt. I wouldn't hear anything but *nihil nisi bonum* about Sir Anthony Blunt. Then there was the man who was head of the Henry Wallace Collection [Sir Francis Watson], who actually just died fairly recently. They all got their knighthoods, eventually. Martin [C. M.] Robertson was professor at University College, London, where I was directly attached for academic purposes. He was the son of D. M. Robertson, the architectural historian, and the brother of Graham Robertson, at Edinburgh; they were well positioned. Martin in London, Daddy at Cambridge, and Graham at Edinburgh. Martin was just a dear, kind man. From 1939, when he came back from a congress in Berlin, to the end of World War II he was an enlisted man in the British Army. He had the courage of his convictions and he refused to take a commission.

Bernard Ashmole was at the British Museum—head of the Greek and Roman department. He was just a delight. You probably know his biography, which the Getty has published. Bernard Ashmole of course had been an officer on the Somme in World War I, and I had a great bonding with him because my mother was in the French Red Cross as a nurse, and she met Bernard when he was wounded and brought into their aid station. So we had a lifelong relationship, and he was a titan, a

great person.

SMITH: Can you characterize what he taught you about Greek art?

VERMEULE: [He taught me] about Greek sculpture particularly. I never learned much from Sir John Davidson Beazley about vases because that field was sort of pre-empted by specialists like Dietrich [von Bothmer]. I regarded vases a little the way the devil regards holy water, though I came to tolerate them. [laughter]

SMITH: You came to buy some as well.

VERMEULE: Yes, I came to buy some as well. But I learned sculpture from Bernard. And then he got me started on this project of cataloging [ancient sculptures] in British country houses. He had done Ince Blundell Hall outside of Liverpool. He had files that were just overwhelming. He'd say, "Now, when you go to Cobham Hall be sure to look at this little group of two erotes fighting," or something like that. He and his wife Dorothy were always having my mother and me to dinner at their lovely flat on the north side of Hyde Park, or their gorgeous modern house—they built one of the first really modern houses out in the country, in Buckinghamshire. So these people touched responsive chords.

SMITH: Now, for this survey of classical art in English country homes, did you actually go into each home?

VERMEULE: Oh, absolutely, for about a five-year period; they were all published in a series of articles in the *American Journal of Archaeology*. Furthermore, we took

old buddy Dietrich along. He hadn't married yet, and he was a bit church mouse-like—not humble, but sort of threadbare, like a church mouse. So he welcomed my mother laying on a limo and taking us all around to these country houses, but he couldn't resist lecturing us. He'd make us get out in a park, where we had to walk a thousand yards from where the car was parked, and he made sure that my mother knew the name of every different type of tree along the way. It was getting so finally I said [pronounced in the French manner], "Mama, I regard trees the way dogs do." I was getting a little bit treed-off. [laughter]

SMITH: Did that survey help you later when you were working here and collecting?

VERMEULE: Yes, but I never exploited it in a great way, though things came up. I probably did help Mr. Jean Paul Getty exploit it at Spink's [Spink and Son], where I helped him collect a lot of things, just before I came to Boston.

SMITH: How did you come to meet Mr. Getty?

VERMEULE: Oh, he was always wandering into Spink's with that lady friend of his who wrote the biography of him. Mr. Phippin and Mr. [Leonard] Forrer made sure I met him. Then he took a fancy to me and maybe once every other week we'd have these lunches in this greasy spoon, and boy, was it greasy—a sort of meat and two veggies kind of place.

SMITH: But it sounds like you weren't quite as struggling as the average graduate student, if your mother was driving you around in a limousine, you had things a little

bit easier than most.

VERMEULE: She had a flat in the Basel Street Hotel in Knightsbridge, which is a pretty spiffy place. It's a kind of hotelian equivalent of the Soane Museum, with period furniture and everything. But I lived in a modest hotel in South Ken[sington], the Stanhope Gardens Hotel, because I wanted to have a little bit of a private social life without Mama in the next room. But when it got cold in the middle of those English winters and whatnot, I'd come slinking up to Mama and say, "Can I spend a couple of nights in your flat?" And she'd say yes.

SMITH: I was wondering about your work at the American School of Classical Studies. Did you go there and spend any time?

VERMEULE: In Athens, not much. Emily, my bride, spent considerable time there, and worked in the Agora. I was made a member of the American School of Classical Studies, but while she was off excavating in the summer I would stay in the library and work, or go down to the Agora for tea or hit the coin dealers in Athens. I've never been a great dirt archaeologist. When we had our own excavations on Cyprus, I used to get to run the commissary, so to speak. I used to go into town and buy the supplies and jolly up the mayor and the post office people and so forth. I'd go to the bank and get a bag of coins and go through the bags looking for a 1957 silver hundred mil piece—as opposed to 1955s, which were very common in the closing days of the raj. Fifty-sevens, you'd find about one in a thousand.

SMITH: Then you came back to the United States to teach?

VERMEULE: Yes. I started at the University of Michigan.

SMITH: In which department?

VERMEULE: In the fine arts department. Marvin Eisenberg, Nate

[Nathan]Whitman, and Mr. [Harold E.]Wethey were there. It was quite a good department in those days, still is. Then after two years I went to Bryn Mawr college and taught there as successor to Rhys Carpenter for two years, and then I came here.

LYONS: And who were your other colleagues at that time?

VERMEULE: Mary Hamilton Swindler . . . Machteld [J.] Mellink was there and has just retired. Then of course there was Richmond Lattimore in the Greek department, where my wife was studying, and T. R. S. Broughton, the great white lion, in the Latin department. And Aunty Nan, as we called her, Agnes Kirsopp Lake-Michaels the daughter of the great guru of Armenia. Mabel Lang was there of course, and she's still there.

SMITH: What courses did you teach at both Michigan and Bryn Mawr?

VERMEULE: I taught a general survey course in antiquity, and a course in Greek sculpture. I still teach the general survey course at Boston College—cave paintings to Constantine. [I retired with the end of the Spring 1997 term.]

SMITH: You have a publication I looked at: *Art of Antiquity*. Is that more or less following your course outline?

VERMEULE: Yes, it's what Eve[lyn B.] Harrison dislikes very much, these people who turn their course notes into books. But mine had a limited circulation; it was primarily for like-minded people, or students, and I had quite a few [of those].

[Tape I, Side Two]

VERMEULE: I have never stopped teaching here at the museum, because I feel that if you're going to be building pianos in a museum you ought to be playing them, that is, communicating with students. Since coming here I taught at Smith for five years, when Phyllis Lehmann's husband Karl died and she wanted to go half time. I taught at Wellesley when Diether Thimme left, and I taught at Boston University for five years, after my wife left. I've taught at Harvard off and on a couple times and given seminars there. There must be a couple of other places.

SMITH: But you did switch your primary energies into the museum field, and I was wondering how that came about. I suppose the question is, how did you get this job? You were a relatively young person at the time, and you were brought in. You were the first permanent curator of classical antiquities since Caskey died, which was in '44.

VERMEULE: Right, yes. There was George Chase, who had been acting president of Harvard in World War II, and he came here as a sort of *locum tenens*. I guess it was because of the big coin collection, though it had been thoroughly cataloged by Agnes Baldwin Brett. But it was also exciting that there was a big sum of money to spend on coins.

SMITH: On coins alone?

VERMEULE: On coins alone—and that's still the case. We've been spending it over the years.

SMITH: Now I gather it was Perry Rathbone who sought you out and recruited you?

VERMEULE: Actually it was George Harold Edgell, his predecessor, and then there was an interim director, Henry P. Rossiter, who was curator of prints. George Harold Edgell even got me to come over to Paris from London, where he interviewed me and took me for a jolly good lunch—one of those places where museum directors eat. So he hired me, but I wasn't ready to come till I'd finished, and then I went to Michigan and Bryn Mawr.

SMITH: So there was a five-year period between when you're first being approached and when you actually arrive, and during that whole period you were planning on settling here?

VERMEULE: Oh I think so, yes; it was in my mind. I loved Michigan and I loved Bryn Mawr, but the chance to preside over a collection like this was just too tempting.

SMITH: Now, to hold a position of that nature, you were actually quite young at the time, I mean you were just thirty.

VERMEULE: A lot of them were in their mid-sixties and seventies.

SMITH: Exactly. You were coming in as a very young person—

VERMEULE: But now I'm the old person. "Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth."

SMITH: Right, but you didn't work your way up from the bottom, you came in at the top as a very young person.

VERMEULE: And just grew ossified.

SMITH: Well, yes, but I'm interested in the conditions under which, despite your youth, you could be given such a big responsibility.

VERMEULE: Well, thirty ain't that youthful. Hadn't Alexander the Great conquered the world by then? And there have been some other notable examples of thirty folk. I guess they just decided the museum was having a little reaction to fuddy duddies and they wanted a young thing. So here I was, eager and ready to come.

SMITH: Before we go on to the museum I did want to ask you about your marriage to Emily Townsend and how that came about, and how you balanced your two careers.

VERMEULE: We met here, at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Archaeological Institute of America, which was in 1953, something like that. She was getting her doctorate at Bryn Mawr and we had a lot of friends in common, like Brooks Emmons Levy, who looks after the coin collections at Princeton. And there was Hanna Holborn Gray, who had gone to Bryn Mawr, and so forth and so on. We had no trouble balancing our careers because Emily's at Neolithic stone sites, the early end of

the spectrum, and I'm at Roman and Byzantine, the much later end of the spectrum—the "filthy Biz," as they call it in the Agora.

SMITH: When you got married, how did that affect your wife's career?

VERMEULE: Well, during our first year that we moved here she had to take a job at Wellesley, replacing Barbara McCarthy, who was professor of Greek. I think she got paid \$1200 for the whole year, going out there and commuting, so she did put in her scut work, so to speak, but then she got a job at Boston University and immediately went right up the ladder, very quickly. She went back to Wellesley, and then she came to Radcliffe.

SMITH: She's been involved in a number of excavations. How have you balanced that with two children?

VERMEULE: We took them to the excavations. There must even be pictures around here of children on excavations. Oh, there's a picture of children on excavations; it's our daughter, who's now teaching at Yale, in her Turkish airline pilot's costume. And that's our son Adrian next to her with his bowl haircut. Of course once you get [to the site] you have all sorts of help. When we were working on the eastern end of Cyprus, Salamis, the whole village adopted the kids. The villagers had a long tradition of working as nannies for the Brits and the Irish who were there with the UN. Then when we moved to western Cyprus, to dig the Mound of Darkness, the same thing happened. Down on the bay of Morphou there was a

whole village which took the children over.

SMITH: So whenever your wife went out to do fieldwork the whole family would come with her?

VERMEULE: Oh yes, and that's how that story got into the newspaper about how she sent them off into a corner of the excavation to get rid of them and they found a Mycenaean house.

LYONS: That's a wonderful story.

SMITH: When you came to the museum, I guess it was beginning to undergo rather major change, what with Rathbone having come with new ideas.

VERMEULE: I was here from '57 to '70 with Perry Townsend Rathbone, and then he got into this colossal head-to-head with George Crossen Seybolt, the president of the museum. You see my penchant for middle names; it's very Bostonian. And George Seybolt used the so-called Raphael [seemingly exported illegally from Italy] as a pretext, as somebody said at the time, to lever Perry out of his job.

SMITH: But when Rathbone was first hired he came in, from what I gather, to revitalize a museum that was in the doldrums.

VERMEULE: Yes, and he did a wonderful job. The membership was scanty, and the outreach was minimal; it had all the [characteristics] of a historical society as opposed to an active museum, and Rathbone shook that all up very well. But I think, sadly, that museum directors have a life of their own, because, as Alan Shestack pointed

out—he was our last director before Malcolm Austin Rogers—"Every director before me has been fired since George Harold Edgell," and then he got fired too. And so they just get tired of them, and new trustees come in and lever them out.

SMITH: What were your goals for the department as you came in? I guess '57 was when you arrived full time.

VERMEULE: Right, but I'd already been commuting every other week. Well, I've always been an attack dog, and as an attack dog my biggest goal was Acquisition with a capital A. And then, conservation, decoration, exposition, and publication. The place is crawling with books; our big sculpture catalog has a successor, and then there's the festschrift for Emily, *Ages of Homer* [published by the University of Texas Press and now appearing in paperback].

LYONS: There was already quite a substantial collection from E. P. [Edward Perry] Warren.

VERMEULE: Yes, absolutely. And some very good publications. Arthur Fairbanks did catalogs of vases in the 1920s, and they're very good.

SMITH: But you listed acquisitions as the first priority, and this was the period when museums all across the country seemed to be acquiring masterpieces with relative success. Maybe we could talk a little bit about some of your acquisitions and the competition you had perhaps for locating the best work. I know you were in competition with the Metropolitan, but weren't other museums trying to build up their

classical collections?

VERMEULE: The Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, and then of course the J. Paul Getty Museum came heavily on the scene. But [the] Toledo [Museum of Art], for instance, and [the] Cleveland [Museum of Art], had a policy of making major acquisitions. There are two Etruscan terracotta plaques mounted on the wall out there in the Etruscan gallery, and the dealer that had them sent a letter simultaneously to Sherman Lee, to Gisela Richter, and to yours truly, saying in effect, first check gets them.

SMITH: Did he have a price?

VERMEULE: Oh yes. Of the other two, one wired and one wrote; I telephoned and got the dealer right off the ski slopes at Zermatt. That's how we got it. So acquisition has been fierce, and of course the major European museums besides Copenhagen have been acquiring: the British Museum, the Berlin Museum under Adolf Greifenhagen, and the Hamburg Museum under Herbert Hoffmann, who was briefly here in our department. The Louvre has had a great spate of [collecting], and then the Swiss museums sort of came on the scene from nowhere: Basel and Zürich.

SMITH: Without necessarily going into absolute numbers, how big was your acquisition budget compared with the institutions you were competing with?

VERMEULE: It was small, but if you kept after Perry Townsend Rathbone, he would find money. We had a couple of benefactors. Horace L. Mayer, whose father

had invented the linotype process, gave us quite a lot of good things. And Benjamin Rowland left us his collection of sculpture, so we got things other than by just laying out the filthy lucre.

SMITH: What would you consider your most important acquisitions?

VERMEULE: John! Help John! What's our most important acquisition of the last forty years? The gold double axe? The two big vases with the fall of Troy on them?

HERRMANN: It's hard to say. I think that the jumpers are so wonderful.

VERMEULE: The Euphronius jumpers out there; the guy blowing on the flutes.

HERRMANN: Yes, it's really such a beautiful and powerful thing.

VERMEULE: Robert Walker, our resident Manchesterman, who restores furniture, looked at them and said, "My, those are handsome yumpers," so we've called them "the yumpers" ever since.

HERRMANN: Also the Ptolemaic head with a stucco beard, particularly in our new display, it has such grandeur; it's just really a major political document of a very obscure period in Hellenistic history.

VERMEULE: You've got your elbow right next to our next acquisition, we hope.

LYONS: Ah, is this on approval?

VERMEULE: Yes, it's on approval. But Rita [E.] Freed, our curator of Egyptian art, has upstaged us considerably by coming up with a \$1.5 million life-sized Ptolemaic king, and this is a mere \$90,000. I mean, this is just *mikris potatas*, as the

Greeks would say, compared to \$1.5 million.

SMITH: So what is this piece here?

VERMEULE: It's an Aphrodite or a nymph, with a mirror probably in her hand, and she's grabbing the back of her hair with the other.

SMITH: And what period is it?

VERMEULE: I'd say about 100 B.C., something like that. It would be a very nice thing to show the Hellenistic female form, as opposed to this, which we own jointly with Shelby White and Leon Levy.

SMITH: Obviously we can't discuss all or even very many of your major acquisitions, but I'd like to discuss some of them across a period of time, to give a sense of how acquisitions has changed over the last thirty years or thirty-five years. Maybe we could start with the gold double axe.

VERMEULE: I think that's a good place to start, because that was, of all places, in a coin dealers' on Fifth Avenue. It had been owned by George Ortiz and he got tired of it and sold it to Hans M. F. Schulman, who was a proud Dutch coin dealer transplanted to this country in the time of Hitler. My wife was responsible for that [acquisition]. She took one look at it and said, "That's from the Archilochori Cave on Crete," where there are a whole lot of little ones, and sure enough, we saw them the next time we went to the Heraklion Museum, but this one is six times the size of any of the others. So that was a good beginning. Then we bought a hoard of gold coins

of the fourth century of our era, of the later Tetrarchs, which were pretty spectacular. We bought the two big vases, one with the fall of Troy on it, and one with the murder of Agamemnon and Aegistus.

SMITH: Now where did those vases come from? How did they come to your attention?

VERMEULE: From Switzerland.

SMITH: From a Swiss dealer?

VERMEULE: Yes, he's been the source of most vases in the past forty years, though occasionally they come up at auction, but generally vases of that importance don't come up at auction.

SMITH: Which dealers are we talking about with the Troy vases?

VERMEULE: We're talking about Münzen und Medallien A. G. and Herbert Cahn in Basel. He contacted us and offered it to us. And the price was, believe it or not, \$14,000. I think the price of the other one, which we got from Robert Emmanuel Hecht, Jr. was . . . I want to say \$19,000. Anyway, they were both under the \$20,000 barrier.

SMITH: And you weren't competing with the Metropolitan for those vases?

VERMEULE: Well, they set a new standard when they bought that Euphronius crater for \$1.5 million. We said good-bye but there were still good vases. And we bought one the same year by the Niobid painter that's just as big. Maybe not quite as

exciting, but I think we paid \$20,000 for it.

SMITH: But it sounds like the dealer would contact you and in most cases you'd be the only person who would be looking at it at that particular time, and then you would either say yes or no. If you said no, then they would go on to somebody else?

VERMEULE: Yes. But you had to make up your mind quickly.

SMITH: Now, with that kind of money did you have the funds at hand with which you could say yes or no, or did you have to go to Rathbone or to your visitor's committee?

VERMEULE: We went to Perry Townsend Rathbone. He was pretty good; if you came groveling and crawling like a lowly worm, why he usually could find the money.

SMITH: What was the process of explaining to the director or to the board these acquisitions?

VERMEULE: You write recommendations that in effect are a mini publication of the object, and that goes through the director, who then explains it to the board, but very often you are called up yourself to talk to the board. When Alan Shestack departed, it was six or seven months before Malcolm Austin Rogers arrived, and yours truly got to run the whole committee on the collections, something I'd done before; and that's really the happy rabbit with the lettuce. You don't favor your cronies, and you try to be even-handed with everybody, but Eric [M.] Zafran, who has departed as our curator of European paintings to be a deputy director of the Jewish Museum in New

York, and I bought a great big Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki—Italian, sixteenth century that is related to a big altarpiece somewhere in northern Italy—and that was a great deal of fun because that appealed to my Greek instincts and it appealed to Zafran's love of top-of-the-line Italian painting.

SMITH: How many pieces would be offered to you, say, on the average, during the year, and how many would you decide to accept?

VERMEULE: You mean in this department?

SMITH: In this department, yes.

VERMEULE: Well, we worked on two levels: there were what Marion True referred to as the "Greek imperial coins," the coins of the Roman empire struck in the Greek part of the world, like Greece and Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria. We had virtually enough money to buy them all night; I mean we tried to select quality. So that was one level, but then there were things like portraits, like the big chap upstairs with the stucco beard that John Joseph Herrmann, Jr., just mentioned. It cost only \$3,000, so in those days it was no big deal; that we got through Herbert Cahn, but it belonged to the Egyptian ambassador in Paris, and he brought it with him from Memphis.

LYONS: In addition to Mr. Cahn, are there particular antiquities dealers that have been influential, or that you have particular respect for?

VERMEULE: Oh we love Uncle Bobby, as the kids call him—Robert Emmanuel Hecht, Jr.—because he's such a colorful fellow and we've gotten very good things

from him. He went to Haverford and so he knew the Philadelphia scene, and his roommate was George Allen, the book dealer. His wife, Betty Lou Chase Hecht, went to Vassar and was a friend of Emily's.

LYONS: These are people who had particular expertise or connoisseurship?

VERMEULE: Yes. And frankly, I'd much rather buy from a dealer that we have a friendly, good relationship with. I hate to be grabbed by the seat of the trousers by somebody pushing something at me. I love dogs, but there's a dog of a portrait out there in the photos on the table that I fear is being pushed toward us, but John and I and Mary Comstock and Rebecca Reed and Florence [Z.] Wolsky feel it's nothing we want to have pushed at us.

SMITH: Are there things that you would buy that the Metropolitan or the Copenhagen Glyptotek wouldn't buy?

VERMEULE: Coins, yes. They wouldn't buy Greek imperial coins. Some of the German museums do: Munich, and Berlin, and the British Museum does. Some of them can be quite big and spectacular. I love the cities of Asia Minor; it's like the big signs that you see over gas stations saying, "I love Snoopy."

SMITH: Conversely, are there things that the Metropolitan would snap up that you would look at and say, "This doesn't fit our collection?"

VERMEULE: Probably archaic Greek grave sculpture, because we can't afford it. Carlos [Picon] and Marion [True] can, but we're pretty much out of the loop, so to

Speak, so we have to buy the "loopa Romana."

SMITH: I wonder, is there a kind of shape to the collection that you're thinking about as you look at pieces? The piece has its own quality and so forth, but do you also think about how it then relates to the other things that are in the collection?

VERMEULE: Yes, we don't just buy any old stuffed animal because it happens to be sitting in the office; we definitely talk about it, the members of the department, and we discuss it with people like David [Gordon] Mitten at Harvard, or with people in New York. We mull it over before we move, but of course the rapidity of the mulling depends on whether it's something we just can't do without.

SMITH: But I wonder, have you turned down pieces that in themselves are good pieces, but you turned them down because they didn't fit your conception of what the department needed?

VERMEULE: Is that big mosaic still out there?

LYONS: Yes.

VERMEULE: Well, after much going around, we've decided that mosaic doesn't fit the conception of the department because we don't have many mosaics, so we want a complete mosaic, and that's a little bit too fragmentary. That's a good example.

LYONS: This one, then, is also here on approval?

VERMEULE: Yes.

SMITH: Can you tell us a little bit about how you acquired the Polyphemus Cyclops

head?

VERMEULE: Oh yes, I'd be happy to; that belonged to Robert Emmanuel Hecht, Jr., and he was asking \$2500 for it. We realized that Edward Waldo Forbes, the great Fogg director, was about to celebrate his ninetieth birthday, so we decided to get twenty-five people to give \$100 each, and that was easy to do. The biggest tightwad on our visitors' committee came through with \$200 because, he said, "I want to set a good example for everybody." But you won't get no Polyphemus like that for any \$2500 anymore.

SMITH: When did prices start skyrocketing, as far as you were concerned?

VERMEULE: I would say when big investor collectors started buying ancient art, like Asher Edelman, and of course the Levys, but they haven't spent ridiculously; they've bought wisely and well. [The late] Larry "Fleischperson" [Fleischman] mortgaged his soul to buy that Cycladic head of which André Emmerich said, quoting from Winston Churchill, "This is not the tide that raises all boats." George Ortiz has inherited a lot of that Patino tin money and spends it. Oh, and the Japanese have come into the market, buying ancient art. So, it's been generally since about 1980.

SMITH: So even through the seventies, after the Euphronius purchase?

VERMEULE: Yes, that was not a tide that raised all boats, though it's a spectacular vase, there's no getting around it.

LYONS: Is there a local culture of antiquities collectors here in Boston, more like a

circle of friends?

VERMEULE: Yes; it's pretty local but there are a few, and there are a couple of dealers, like Hearst and Hearst, and there are auction houses too, and they have things, but you really have to go out of Boston.

SMITH: How many trips would you make a year to look at these different houses? Would you go to Europe once a year?

VERMEULE: I don't do much anymore because John and his wife are out there, [but] I used to go every summer, yes. We'd do the run from London to Paris, sometimes Amsterdam, Basel, Zürich.

SMITH: And the dealers would anticipate your coming and get something for you to look at?

VERMEULE: We'd let them know, yes. There were auctions too—well pedigreed things from Sotheby and Christie auctions. There were old collections coming on the market, like the Wilton House collection, or pieces of the Lansdowne collection that still come up, or French collections. We bought two splendid Attic grave reliefs that are upstairs: one dated 393 B.C. and the other was Roman, second century A.D.

They came from the Vicomte du Dresnay, who was the French ambassador or minister to Greece in World War I, and because the French had helped the Greeks so much they gave them these two stelae. So they were legitimate things that he could sell—or his estate could.

SMITH: I notice in 1968 you got a Priapus which had been in Marbury Hall. I presume that this was something that you knew about from your graduate school days?

VERMEULE: Well, it sort of disappeared, and I forget where it reappeared; it was with one of the dealers in London. But things drop out of sight, and this dropped out of sight for about twenty or thirty years after WWII. The sale was in 1941, when prices were just . . . you weep. Three pounds ten shillings for a statue like that. But this bust out there fetched the most of anything in the sale, because people realized it was something to have. I think it fetched £16 or something. We bought that two years ago from a French dealer based in London. I've been told that it spent some time in Florida, where there are antiquities, or out in Long Island, moldering, like that big sarcophagus that belonged to Flora Whitney and her brother that was bought by the Berlin museum; these were the two Whitney's who were [the subjects of] the delightful child portraits by Augustus Saint-Gaudens—Flora and "Sonny Boy" Whitney.

SMITH: In 1972 you bought a statue of Meleager. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Is there anything of special note?

VERMEULE: Oh yes, we bought that with money that the Rowlands had provided and because we liked its curly hair. It's the Meleager done by the Greek sculptor, Scopas [of Paros], and one should always have a good Scopasian piece, and so you

can say Praxiteles, Lysippus, Scopas, the triad of the fourth century. You've done your homework, guys.

SMITH: Well, we try. And that is as simple as that; it allowed you to extend your teaching collection?

VERMEULE: Yes, and that's something you never want to say, that you buy a work of art to fill a gap, but if the gap is glaring, and you have no complete Praxitelean Venus, or Aphrodite, you buy one.

SMITH: Even if it's not necessarily the very best that you could have?

VERMEULE: Well, that one I think is the best we've seen, and we have torsi that look like that. But this is the best we've come across in quite a few years. As for the mosaic out there, we want a complete one.

LYONS: Are you bothered because of the fact that it's obviously been removed from a larger mosaic just to bring the head? Is that a consideration?

VERMEULE: Yes, it might be. It's still embarrassing if it turns out that some *soprintendente* in Calabria sees a picture of it published in the *Art Journal* and says it's stolen, but you're covered with jurats and receipts, as you know from the Getty, from all the dealers. They have to take the responsibility. If there's any claim brought against a work of art, why, they're responsible for taking the work of art back.

LYONS: But you do a great deal of research?

VERMEULE: We try to do research, but something like that gives me bad vibes.

SMITH: Meaning, you think it's stolen?

VERMEULE: Well, probably not stolen, but maybe pried out of a hurried, illicit dig, or pried up where an apartment or something was going up. I was in Carthage about a year ago, Tunis and Carthage, and you could see this great building boom going on all around Carthage. You could just see these little holes in the ground where the "mouse aches", as we call them, had been removed. Of course they're probably untraceable. We have our scruples; we don't want to encourage illicit excavation just to bring things onto the market, because there is plenty of it. Remember that time, oh, ten years ago, maybe it was, when the Newark Museum bought a gorgeous mosaic of an Amazon galloping on horseback, with her *pelta* shield over one shoulder and her axe raised in the other? Whammo, they published it, and back from the director general of antiquities of Syria came a picture of the complete mosaic with a hole in the middle.

LYONS: This issue, as you know, is such a touchy one. What is your philosophy when antiquities are really not documented?

VERMEULE: Well, you do the best you can to find your documentation: if they've been through an auction house or something, and you don't want to get burned, as possibly we and the Levy-Whites got burned with that Heracles—though there's no proof that it was discovered at the same time the lower part was.

LYONS: Did you come to some agreement with the Turkish authorities on this

question, or where does it stand now?

VERMEULE: Right now there's a stillness at Appomatox, but you never know when our government, to extract a quid pro quo in the drug war or something, will just step right in and force private institutions to hand over things without proper [documentation]. There is that fragment of the sarcophagus in Antalya of Heracles shooting the Stymphalian birds. They make such a big deal of the fact that it got separated from the sarcophagus and came to the Getty Museum. It could have been excavated a hundred years before the rest of the sarcophagus. But now you go in the Antalya Museum and they don't give you any thanks when these things are repatriated. You are still the great Satan. The label in the Antalya Museum is four times the size of the fragment, and describes the iniquities of the great museum along Pacific Coast Highway.

SMITH: In the sixties though, when you were starting out and you were an attack dog, and the culture of course was different, what were the considerations given to these kinds of questions?

VERMEULE: You still did not wish to be burned there. I couldn't take my fiz into the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, or the American Academy in Rome, having just bought a real hot antiquity. So I'm saying in the sixties there was enough for everybody, so you didn't have to play dangerously. There's a little bit of a danger element nowadays. The Levy-Whites had an Attic grave stele, the lower half

of which is in one of the museums in Attica, and there's that big stele in the Dallas Museum—Merrill Clement Rueppel bought it, later our director—and now bits of that have been found in Attica. But it doesn't mean that it couldn't have been excavated years ago.

LYONS: [I'd like to] talk more about the politics of long-term loans from Greek and Italian museums, and those kinds of [issues].

VERMEULE: Well, Maxwell Anderson did that a lot at Emory University. We're lending the Boston Throne upstairs to the Italians next year, to a show in Venice [*The Greek World: Art and Civilization in Magna Graecia*] which will also go to the Metropolitan Museum, so we are pursuing healthy loans.

SMITH: In '79 you got the portrait head of Hadrian. I wonder if you could talk about that.

VERMEULE: That was in honor of my having served as director during one of their crises, between Perry Rathbone and Merrill Rueppel. The trustees voted, I think it was \$35,000, or maybe it was \$25,000, to buy one work of art. But of course it had to come out of the funds, so it was never in honor of yours truly's interim, it was in honor of Mr. Frank B. Bemis, who gave the funds to be spent. Do you know what Mr. Bemis invented?

SMITH: No, I don't.

VERMEULE: The flat-bottomed paper bag. [laughter] Well, these are little simple

things, but nobody had a flat-bottomed paper bag before Mr. Bemis came along and invented the folding mechanism. The portrait head came from Egypt.

[Tape II, Side One]

VERMEULE: Mr. Michael J. Abemayor was a great friend of Norbert Schimmel, the collector of the previous generation, and of Herbert Cahn. Both of them said, "You ought to buy that big head in Abemayor's front salon that comes from Atribis, in Egypt." I had just read about Atribis because Richard Milhous Nixon, when he was president of the United States and went to Egypt, was seen on the railway train at Atribis, which is the junction at the bottom of the delta, where you go to Alexandria and you go to Suez and all directions. He was seen standing on the rear of the train platform doing this [making the "V" sign], so I had Atribis well in my mind. There had been a big shrine of Hadrian that had gotten buried under the modern city. So that was something we could buy without fear. Of course there are plenty of Hadrians around—old Hadrians, new Hadrians. The most glorious Hadrian is that nude one in yours truly's book *Greek and Roman Sculpture in America*[: *Masterpieces in Public Collections in the United States and Canada*]. It's in New Iberia, Louisiana, in front of the New Iberia Savings Bank. It came from Cobham Hall, and they bought it on my suggestion because Hadrian was a Spaniard, and they are New Iberia—Spanish Roman.

SMITH: Do you do a lot of consultation with private collectors and corporations?

VERMEULE: Oh yes.

SMITH: They come to you then?

VERMEULE: Yes, or somebody sends them to us. We have a team here; we bat it around and try to come up with a good call.

SMITH: In that case did you know that the statue was on the market?

VERMEULE: Oh, this was on the market. It was thirty years ago, so it was like the deacon and the shark.

SMITH: I don't know that story.

VERMEULE: Well, if you go to Mount Athos, and it's a hot summer day, and you're working with George [H.] Forsyth in the library or whatnot, you look down and you see that beautiful, clear, blue Mediterranean water. You start down there to go for a swim, and the reverend abbot comes running out of the monastery you've been in, [yelling], "You can't swim there. One of our deacons was eaten by a shark." The same [scenario] is repeated at two or three other monasteries. Finally you find in the records that in the eighth century of our era a deacon was reputed to have been frightened by a shark.

SMITH: I wanted to ask you about the Aphrodite of Cnidos, which you acquired in '81, which is about the time you are saying that the prices were beginning to rise. How did that purchase come about?

VERMEULE: Was this the Aphrodite that Iris Cornelia Love, my cousin, discovered

in the basement of the British Museum? But that never came on the market; that was just a whim of Iris Cornelia Love, though I love her dearly.

LYONS: I just saw her at a meeting in Toronto three weeks ago. She brought her little dog, who was also wearing a name tag.

VERMEULE: Oh, the sweetie pie. Well Cornelius Ruxton Love and Iris Cornelia—all the Corneliuses—go back to a relative of mine from New Jersey who went to Chapel Hill in the nineteenth century and married the president of the University of North Carolina. When the Union forces were about to march through on their way to Georgia, why she came out and rang the bell of the college to rally the troops, so she's known as the "woman that rang the bell." They've been proud of the Cornelius-Cornelia connection ever since.

Of course any publicity, like the Riace bronzes, or the centaur that was found in the Straits of Messina, generates new interest in ancient art, and probably new interest in the art market. Certainly if you go to Romanelli, one of my favorite places [along the Arno] in Florence, you can buy a Riace bronze this big off the table. You can buy one the size of this room there if you're one of those Iranian Hollywood landowners. You can get them in all sizes and shapes; I think that's kind of fun.

SMITH: As the prices have increased, has that changed the kinds of things that you look at now? Has the scale decreased, or the kinds of materials?

VERMEULE: Not necessarily. You can buy some pretty thumping sculptures at

modest prices, and we've really come to rely very heavily on good friends. When I was in graduate school at Harvard, or even still an undergraduate, there was a coin dealer down in Scolley Square, where the Boston City Hall is now; it was the Royal Coin Company, and then it became Royal Athena. Jerome Martin Eisenberg was there, and he's been very, very good to us, both giving us things and letting us have things at wholesale prices. So while there has been an increase in the market, we've had resources to cope with it to a great extent.

SMITH: How would you compare your collecting style vis-à-vis Dietrich von Bothmer's at the Metropolitan or Marion True's at the Getty?

VERMEULE: Dietrich is now long gone but not hard to find. It's now Carlos Picon. Well I think [the difference] is our emphasis on coins, particularly Greek imperial coins.

SMITH: And that would be the only distinction you would [point out] between the two institutions during the "classic period" of the sixties and seventies? You would both be going after similar kinds of materials?

VERMEULE: There's always something that nobody else wants. There's a Roman republican portrait upstairs in the main gallery that was one of our biggest purchases, money-wise; that was I think \$320,000. And there's a lady up there, who we call "the lady with hair," that was also quite expensive, but partly given to us by Ed and Sam Merrin at the Merrin Galleries. These were big ticket items and we were able to

acquire them, so there's still life in the old bones.

LYONS: Can you characterize Dietrich von Bothmer's style, and his curatorial eye?

VERMEULE: Well, his eye is great for vases, there's no question about it.

Absolutely. He'll see a fragment in collection A that joins a fragment in collection B, that joins a fragment in a dealer's in Zürich or Basel or something. I guess that silver treasure [now back in Turkey], as well as the Euphronius crater, was one of his greatest coups. The silver treasure had to go back, and I know a lot of people feel badly about that. I know Shelby White is livid. They even sent to Turkey one piece of silver that had come from Alexandria, in Egypt, and had nothing to do with that group.

LYONS: It had been mixed in with the hoard?

VERMEULE: Yes, and when the Turkish government brought the guy that claimed to have dug them up and asked him which one he was most proud of having dug up, he pointed at the one that they had bought from Frieda Tchakos, who's a dealer who gets many of things from Egypt.

LYONS: It makes you wonder.

VERMEULE: Makes you stop and think, it does.

SMITH: What about changes in exhibition policies? When you came here, how were things displayed, what kind of changes did you then make as you took over the department?

VERMEULE: Well, we painted, and we cleaned up, and we lightened the colors.

When I first came here, we had an elderly assistant curator who thought kitchen green was the only color you should have in galleries. We got rid of that as rapidly as we could. When she retired even more kitchen green went. It's all gone now I think. So far as special exhibitions go, we've had blockbusters right from the beginning: the tomb of King Midas from Gordian, which we did jointly with [William] Stevenson Smith, the Egyptian curator. In 1976 we had the show *Romans and Barbarians* [to commemorate] 476, and in 1979 we had the big Pompeii show to commemorate '79. At one time we had all the temporary exhibition space in the building carpeted with two great classical shows: *The Human Figure in Greek Art*, and the master bronzes show, *The Gods delight: The Human Figure in Classical Bronze*, which went to Los Angeles and Cleveland; the catalog is out there.

SMITH: Are there any other ways you've changed how you mount your collections? I know in '67 you did a complete renovation of the classical galleries; I wonder what your thinking was as you did that renovation and how dramatic a change was it in the presentation of the materials?

VERMEULE: Well, what you try to do is to get rid of heavy pedestals. I don't mean just the bases but the little intermediate pedestals, because when you have a pedestal that's bigger than the work of art itself, it tends to distract. So we did a lot of that, and you use plastic mounts, and of course big new cases that you can see into well,

with good lighting. Paint, supporting materials, whether cases or pedestals, lighting—all of that is important. I think the gallery upstairs, where the Polyphemus is, is one of the best examples of what we've done. And John Joseph Herrmann, Jr., has been updating those cases and galleries steadily.

SMITH: What were the differences between the way you and your generation exhibited materials and the generation that preceded you?

VERMEULE: When I came here we had old cases that had been acquired from the Victoria and Albert Museum when it was the South Kensington Museum. They were dark wood and you couldn't see inside them; it was pretty much like a nineteenth-century German *Wunderkammer* or something. So light and lively was the cry, and still is.

SMITH: I have noticed, particularly since the beginning of the eighties, that there's a tendency to use more dramatic lighting and darker colors, textured wallpapering—not necessarily with a pattern, but a damask kind of texture.

VERMEULE: Yes, there has been.

SMITH: I wonder of course how these aesthetic choices develop, and what's the thinking behind them as people start moving the lights about and deciding to paint things dark magenta.

VERMEULE: I think they see that a work of art can't be seen, particularly if the case is foggy and dirty and whatnot. It's an instinct, and it's all headed in the right

direction, I'd say.

SMITH: Is it the development of new lighting technologies?

VERMEULE: Yes, oh absolutely. New fluorescence and tubular lighting and so forth. Our electricians try to keep up on the latest technology.

SMITH: But it does seem to me that there was for a period a preference for what you might call flat overall lighting, and since 1980 or so the preference has shifted to sort of dramatic, high-key lighting. In both cases you can see the piece; it's a question of how you present it, so I'm wondering what the thinking is as this more purely aesthetic kind of shift occurs.

VERMEULE: I just don't know. I like both the high ceiling lighting and the inner case lighting when they work well. If something isn't lighting an object, or is killing it with too much light, why, then it's not working.

SMITH: What do you think about indoor versus outdoor light as your lighting source? Some of the new museums and gallery extensions have gone to great trouble to bring in skylights, or clerestory lights, and then there are others that go to great trouble to make sure there's no exterior light whatsoever.

VERMEULE: I don't like that. I say mix the lighting according to the piece: a flat Roman mirror, a piece of ivory, a coin, a vase. Sometimes the highlights will kill a vase because it's two-thirds in darkness and you can't see the detail. Maybe the best way to light it would be to have a light that travels around the case slowly or a vase

that revolves on a pedestal.

SMITH: What was your involvement in the planning of the I. M. Pei extension?

VERMEULE: We all went to interminable meetings when it opened up, and the one who had the strongest ideas about it was John Walsh, because he wanted his paintings to show well. But I'll be long gone and hard to find in another month, so I'm terminal.

SMITH: But when they were planning the addition did you have any strong opinions about how things ought to be done?

VERMEULE: I sort of suspect that I. M. Pei is a little I. M. Pei-ish in his plans; he wants not the works of art in the galleries to look the best, but just the whole space.

LYONS: I suspect that's the case with most architects.

VERMEULE: I did not open my stomatic aperture on these occasions and insert my podial appendage. [laughter]

SMITH: What about publication changes? Did you come here wanting to do more publication?

VERMEULE: Oh definitely, yes. And I think we did; we put out picture books as they're called, and catalogs. Then we got nice friends like the Getty Museum, when Sandra [Knudsen] Morgan was there, to publish *Greek and Roman Sculpture in America*.

SMITH: Are these your most important catalogs, would you say?

VERMEULE: No our most important catalogs are things like this dog-eared one

here that's a catalog of sculpture: Greek, Etruscan, and Roman.

SMITH: *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts*, from 1976.

VERMEULE: There's already been a supplement.

SMITH: How much would something like this cost in those days? Was it relatively expensive?

VERMEULE: Fairly expensive. I think we got grants from different people; they are probably listed in the front [of the catalog].

SMITH: This was a case where one could go to the Ford Foundation for funding, and then there were gifts from about two dozen individuals, including yourself and your wife.

VERMEULE: You put your money where your mouth is.

SMITH: Is this catalog directed towards a general reading audience?

VERMEULE: Well, students do read it generally, and it's got a bibliography of every published reference that we could find to things in the collection up to that date, and then that's been updated. It's a reference book, definitely.

SMITH: Right, so it's not directed towards the average museum goer.

VERMEULE: Well, the average museum goer would use the general handbook of the museum, which has hands all over the cover—because it's a handbook.

SMITH: What do museum goers want to know when they're moving through the

galleries?

VERMEULE: We have gallery guides, which you can buy for very modest amounts of money, and they are written in a general way, but not to downgrade the public.

SMITH: What types of things do you wind up deciding to say about a piece?

VERMEULE: Oh, it depends on the piece itself. There's a statue of a dog upstairs in the far gallery, and I think it still belongs to Herbert Cahn and the Bernoulli family in Basel, and it was stuck on a pedestal whose label says, "Sphinx," because the pedestal was used for one of our Etruscan sphinxes, and one time we were walking by and we saw a mother and her little child go up to this work of art, and the child said, "Look at the dog, Mother," and the mother looked at the label and said, "That's not a dog, that's a sphinx."

LYONS: The tyranny of the label.

SMITH: So you have corrected that, I presume?

VERMEULE: We may have even left it, still saying "Sphinx." We have committees here that practice writing labels; it's become a great cult in America.

SMITH: What is your personal relationship to the trustees? It sounds like they've been very active in determining the direction of the museum.

VERMEULE: I get along very well with them. I don't want to do that sort of work, and they don't want to either now; they want Malcolm Austin Rogers to run the museum. When they were being over-actively meddlesome, as they were in Perry

Rathbone's last days, then I felt they should back off, but now I think things are going very well.

SMITH: But at that time—I guess Rathbone left in '72—did you and the other curators make your position known to the trustees?

VERMEULE: Yes. We didn't want Rathbone to go. We had a big eyeball to eyeball meeting at one of the hotels down near MIT, and it was quite something. But they were calling the tune, however sugar-coated they did it, and off he went.

SMITH: What were the main issues of dispute? Do you recall?

VERMEULE: I suppose the Raphael was made the pretext to lever him out, because it had to go back to Italy, but the real issue was a struggle for power between the president and the director.

SMITH: And the president of the board of trustees wanted to run the show?

VERMEULE: Yes.

SMITH: But why?

VERMEULE: Because he had worked his way up from a stock boy in Underwood deviled ham and potted meat products. We called him Mr. Potted Meats. He had also bought B&M baked beans, and that gave us a couple of other less attractive names for him. When he got ahold of something, he wanted to run it.

SMITH: And what did he want to do with it? I mean, when you run something, you want to run it somewhere, so I'm wondering what the conflict was over. You seem to

be suggesting it was just personalities.

VERMEULE: He found Merrill Clement Rueppel, who had been in Minneapolis and then later in Dallas, and brought him here after a decent interval, which was presided over by yours truly. We had Merrill Clement Rueppel for two years, and it was a disaster. He just couldn't manage; he could dictate but not manage.

SMITH: How does the relationship with a director affect the running of a department like this? Could you characterize the differences in the way this department functioned under the different directors?

VERMEULE: We're the farthest, logistically, from the director's office of any department in the museum, so we can circle the wagons out here in the corridor and pretty much ignore them—or circle the chariots, I should say—until we need the money.

SMITH: But it can't just be the local geography of the building; there's got to be something more to it than that.

VERMEULE: Well, out of sight, out of mind. When you're a department that's right next to the director's office, like prints and drawings, or, later, European paintings, or Asiatic, you're going to get noticed much more often than when you're way over here and the director has to make a conscious effort. It's amazing how long it takes a director to make a conscious effort to come to the other end of the building. If you implore him to come, or her, to look at a work of art, that's fine, but if you sit around

waiting for Mohammed to come to the mountain, you'll be waiting for weeks, months, years.

SMITH: I suppose this museum is probably no different than most others anywhere in the western world in that the painting department probably tends to be the one that's the most highly visible. How does that mentality affect your work in classical antiquities?

VERMEULE: Well, now there are two painting departments—American painting and European painting, but it doesn't affect us at all. [That attitude] all started I think with W. G. Constable, who came from the [Courtauld Institute] to be our great guru and curator of paintings. He said, "You need to remember that in a big museum like this, there are the pictures and then there are the *objets d'art*," and he spat it out like a Southerner saying "damn Yankee." [laughter] That was pretty much it.

SMITH: But did you feel that you were in competition with other departments at any point?

VERMEULE: No. Sometimes with Egypt, as with this \$1.5 million green serpentine statue, but they need a big purchase from time to time. And of course we all benefit from major acquisitions by gift or purchase in the field of pictures, like William Appleton Coolidge's great bequest.

SMITH: Benefit in the sense of more attention, so that you can then go to your donors and say, "Look we have this wonderful bequest. Would you match it?"

VERMEULE: Well, not quite so parochial, but everybody feels good when there's a big [bequest]. Alan Shestack said that Mabuse would fetch \$30 million now, [the painting] that Bill Coolidge left the museum. He was thinking about London, Sotheby prices.

SMITH: You did mention Egyptian art and I was wondering what your relationship was with William Stevenson Smith?

VERMEULE: Oh, he was one of my teachers. I forgot, I took a course with him at Harvard. And Rita Freed, the now curator, who comes from New Jersey like me, wrote to me when she was in high school about a career in Egyptology. We still have the letter kind of framed in the files—like Marion True.

LYONS: You talked about Marion early on, and maybe we could come back to her, because she largely trained here.

VERMEULE: She had I think a happy time here, and certainly worked hard. We gave her every opportunity until she left full time to get her degree over at Harvard. It was a very happy time when she got her doctorate that June at Harvard. Dietrich Felix von you-know-who came up and took all the credit for it. J. Michael Padgett and I sat around and laughed. And Marion laughed.

SMITH: She started as an intern?

VERMEULE: Yes, when she was in high school.

SMITH: What was the training program?

VERMEULE: Just *Arbeit macht frei*—you just start to work. People find out what there is to be done, and of course Mary Bryce Comstock, who's down at the other end of the office, was a great teacher.

SMITH: When you came to the BMFA, how big was the classical antiquities staff? Was it you and Hazel Palmer?

VERMEULE: It was Hazel Palmer and myself, and then godmother Mary [Bryce Comstock], who's also godmother to our daughter, joined us, and then Florence Wolsky came, the one who found the earring in the Fenway. We've grown modestly but healthfully.

SMITH: Perhaps you could talk a little bit about your visiting committee; when that was formed, and what you wanted it to do.

VERMEULE: Well, the one time we really needed them and they came crashing through was when the great dean of Harvard graduate school, J. Peterson Elder, was head of our visitors committee as a Harvard trustee. It was to save the staircase in the front hall, because Rueppel wanted to take that staircase out and gut the center of the building and that was a sort of ecumenical issue for the whole museum, and I think J. Peterson Elder got Rueppel levered out of the museum in a famous zinger where he said he couldn't find where the staircase was and he wasn't going to come to the museum any more. [laughter] That sounds quixotic and odd but it was true.

SMITH: I did want to ask you about some of the people who seem to have

contributed money directly to the department, people who allowed you to acquire things. What about Lucy Rowland?

VERMEULE: Lucy Rowland has been wonderful over the years, a brick. She established the Benjamin and Lucy Rowland Fund in memory of her husband, and she gives us money sometimes four times a year. We build it up and spend the interest. Of course Leon Levy and Shelby White have been very helpful in that respect, and DeCoursey Fales, who lives in Cambridge has been very supportive and there are a couple of others. Oh, of course Josephine Murray, the grand-daughter of the great telecommunications fortune. She's been just wonderful.

SMITH: Do these donors participate in the intellectual life of the department?

VERMEULE: Oh yes, they come once or twice a year. We have a meeting; we had one just a couple of weeks ago. For the first time, and this is why I love him now so dearly, Malcolm Austin Rogers came at the beginning and stayed through the whole meeting, which consisted of lunch and an afternoon lecture by yours truly on my forty years as an attack dog. Furthermore, [Rogers] wrote me a note saying how much he'd enjoyed the meeting. Heretofore we've had directors who've come, stayed ten minutes, told us how wonderful they were, and departed.

SMITH: How knowledgeable are your supporters of things antique?

VERMEULE: Very knowledgeable.

SMITH: So you solicit and value their opinions.

VERMEULE: Yes. There are collectors like Ernie [Dr. Ernest] Kahn, who was married to Ginny [Virginia] Lewisohn, and of course he collected small bronzes and things, and it was always kind of fun to see these little bronzes in his rooms with these great impressionist paintings that had come as her share of the Lewisohn collection: the *Gare Saint-Lazare* and things like that. But Kahn is very knowledgeable on collecting. David Gordon Mitten of course, being a pro, is very knowledgeable, and he collects Greek imperial coins, which is nice.

SMITH: What about Walter Gilbert? He was a name I kept running across.

VERMEULE: Wally, the Nobel Laureate. He's just joined our committee, as has Karen Bassett Manchester Frantz. I've known the Frantzs since Angus, the oldest brother, went to Pomfret with me. Then he came to Harvard; he was a second former when I was a sixth former. And James Huntington, aka Tony, is the youngest, and the middle one is a famous doctor. Have you heard about Sherman? Sherman is the full-grown parrot which Tony bought, and he takes it to work on his shoulder.

What's the other son's name? Anyway, Karen decided that the parrot was luring her affections ever so slightly, so she bonded with the parrot and the parrot bit her on the *poitrine*. [laughter]

LYONS: So she comes to the meetings regularly?

VERMEULE: Yes, well, she's only come to one because it was the first one. Wally Gilbert as you know is a chemist—DNA and things like that. He's also a Nobel

laureate. He's got a large and eclectic collection in his house in Cambridge.

SMITH: So how did he come to be drawn into your web?

VERMEULE: Through my wife. They belonged to an eating club—those peculiar things that exist in major cities here and there. I think it was the Examiner Club or the Cambridge Scientific Club, though a lot of them aren't scientists. He bought a Greek vase from Mr. Ede in London, and at one of the dinners he showed Emily a picture of this vase, and she said, "Couldn't you have done better, Wally?" Or something like that. I mean she gets right to the point. Wally sort of slunk off with his tail between his legs. He then came in here with the picture, and Mary, John, Florence and Rebecca, and whoever else was here that day all made much of his vase and he felt better.

SMITH: Well, who was right?

VERMEULE: It wasn't the greatest Euphronius in the world, but neither was it a flea-market special, so everybody was right.

SMITH: Does the name Langdon Clay ring a bell?

VERMEULE: Oh yes. He's been very generous to our department, with vases and the gold treasure which is out there. But lately he's concentrated all his efforts on the pre-Columbian collection.

SMITH: Collectors' interests do shift. How do you anticipate that sort of thing? Is it something you have worried about?

VERMEULE: So long as they don't shift away from the museum, I don't worry. I like the things [Clay] bought. He bought a big collection in New York from the dealer Alphonse Jax and gave it to the MFA and a collection of pre-Columbian but post-Columbus silver which he's bought, out of churches in South and Central America. Just a little bit of it's on exhibit, but it's been rotated.

SMITH: What about [the late] Mrs. Eugene Davidson?

VERMEULE: She is the mother of John Herrmann's previous wife, Ariel, who lives in New York, and her interests have been directed more to the Art Institute of Chicago, from whence she came, and the Santa Barbara Museum, on the west coast.

[Tape II, Side Two]

SMITH: Another issue that you allude to [off-tape] had to do with the handling of art that was considered too risque for the general public. I guess I was surprised that things had been hidden away.

VERMEULE: And now they're all displayed. It was proper Boston's taste at the end of the last century up until about 1960, and then it was whoop-de-do—totally unexpurgated. We used to have complaints, like one or two or three a month, when things were expurgated, but when we unexpurgated them we got no complaints whatsoever. Nobody's come beating on the door saying, "Your satyr out there is out of control!" [laughter] The Metropolitan has a splendid collection of pornographic statues and so do we; ours came from Edward Perry Warren, and theirs came from

my wife's great uncle, Archer Milton Huntington.

LYONS: There's a long tradition of secret museums.

SMITH: Was this a controversial decision, to unexpurgate the art and to bring things up from the basement?

VERMEULE: No, no. But when I first came here the great vase out there, the main piece of the Pan Painter, was in a dark corner so you couldn't see pan and the goat herd, and the hermaphrodite. I think it was Dean [George H.] Chase who had Hazel Palmer catalog all the pornographic objects, but the only thing she could put on the card was *simplegma* ["coupling"]; that was the only operative word she could use.

SMITH: What about your own tastes in modern and contemporary art and literature? Do you keep current?

VERMEULE: Well, my wife and I watch every John Wayne movie that was ever made. That isn't modern enough, that isn't what he means.

SMITH: No, sure, in the 1950s and 60s that was very modern.

VERMEULE: Right. I don't know . . . we do collect drawings, and some are fairly contemporary, but most are old master drawings, just because we like them. We don't collect extremely modern art, just because we don't have any room in our house for it.

SMITH: Do you go to shows at the Institute of Contemporary Art?

VERMEULE: I've been there, but I don't go there regularly. I'll see what the Fogg

or the Sackler is hanging. And if I'm in Boston College, Nancy Netzer has contemporary shows. I'm not oblivious to [contemporary art], and I'm not rejecting it; I just don't waddle far across the street to find it.

SMITH: Let's shift back to the questions of provenance and the effects of the UNESCO treaty.

VERMEULE: Has it been ratified by America?

SMITH: Yes. Has that had any affect on your work?

VERMEULE: No, not so far. I'm not going to go out and buy something that slaps in the face of UNESCO.

SMITH: You've spent a lot of time in Greece and Turkey, as well as Cyprus. What about your relationship with archaeological communities in those three countries?

VERMEULE: They've been very good. The [former] director general of antiquities in Turkey, whose wife went to Bryn Mawr, wants [one of our pieces back], I think.

When I was in Istanbul, in the courtyard of the museum, about a year ago, why, the director fingered me and leaped out of his limo. We had a pleasant little confrontation. I said it wasn't up to me; it was Shelby White who was calling the cards on this.

SMITH: When you bought this piece, you indicated in a newspaper article that you did some provenance research.

VERMEULE: Well, its underhalf has an old break; you can't see it in a modern

plaster cast, and it's right now at One Sutton Place South, the Levy-White palazzo. I had no evidence that it had been found in recent years and I still don't; there's no documentation in any excavation notebooks. Perge, where it was discovered, as you probably know, is one of the most changed-hands cities on the southern coast of Pamphylia. It was part of the Ottoman empire until 1918. From 1918 to 1922 it was occupied by the Italians, and since then it's been part of modern Turkey, but in 1922 the Greek and Armenian population left, taking heaven knows what with them. So it's hard to say that this was found at a given site in Turkey in 1980.

SMITH: Which is what's been claimed?

VERMEULE: Yes, because the other half was found.

SMITH: In what way do those kinds of controversies affect your ability to do your work as a museum curator or as an archaeologist?

VERMEULE: It doesn't affect it one bit.

SMITH: It's just a controversy, a dispute?

VERMEULE: Yes. I haven't been banned from any countries.

SMITH: But some people have been banned, right? I mean they've wound up getting into such hot water that they can't show their faces in Greece or Turkey.

VERMEULE: Well, I think of Christopher Jones, who's a professor of history and epigraphy at Harvard, who came smiling into one of the ministries in Ankara asking permission to do a land survey, and he had this old map of the eighteenth or

nineteenth century that showed Greater Armenia and Lesser Armenia. He was marched to the airport so fast. Before he knew what had hit him he was in London.

LYONS: That's not surprising.

SMITH: Maybe we could talk a little bit about your teaching at Boston College.

You've been teaching the survey course since 1977. Is this is a large lecture course?

VERMEULE: It's got about thirty students in it.

SMITH: Oh, so then you have a lot of interaction with the students.

VERMEULE: When they show up, yes, but sometimes they're interacting at South Bend, Indiana, with the Notre Dame football team.

SMITH: What is it you want them to get out of the course?

VERMEULE: I tell them that it's not a course that's required for the development of their life, so I want them to relax and enjoy it and get some feeling for ancient art and history, without having to take down every slide and every little detail. I want them to see the forest, not the trees.

LYONS: Over the years have there been students of yours who have gone on professionally in classical archaeology?

VERMEULE: Yes, oh yes.

LYONS: Who are they?

VERMEULE: From Boston College, there's one who's a bookseller in New York and I see him at the AIA conventions and I've forgotten his name. I've had students

from Harvard. Maybe David Mitten would be the most famous one. I'm becoming like the dormouse in *Alice in Wonderland*.

[break]

SMITH: We wanted to discuss a little bit about connoisseurship and the development of your eye, and how important you feel connoisseurship is to a person working in your field.

VERMEULE: Oh, it's always important; as I said, apropos of Dr. Jakob Rosenberg, "Connoisseurship is everything." It's like the parable of the visually challenged males and the elephant in China; it's something different to everybody. To some it's a tree trunk, to others it's a great fire hose, to others it's a snake, to others it's a palm frond. So it's hard to answer that question, that's big and amorphous, but buy the best or accept the best and you'll never regret it. Don't compromise and don't take junk.

SMITH: But how do you know that something's the best? I mean, aside from a sort of received wisdom, how do you develop an eye that enables you to say with authority, "This really is the best"? Were there things you bought that you later regretted buying?

VERMEULE: Yes, but in the rising market they've long since gone, at a profit. I'm not meaning to be a traitor, but you can unload your mistakes. I just can't put it in words. You go to a bank, and you hand over twenty thousand dollar bills, and in the midst of counting them the teller says, "This one's a fake." You say, "How do you

know?" He says, "Well, I've handled so many genuine ones." That's trite, but true.

The two capitols out there in the other room, out on the ledge, are both quality and rarity: late antique capitols in a sort of serpentine, and Heracles, when we have his original here, is quality of a Roman sort. Even though there's only half of him it's a great half. And that little Aphrodite I think speaks for itself, when you look in the book here and see the other Aphrodites. It's just honing the eye, but that's clichéd.

SMITH: With some things, like Cycladic art and Tanagra pottery, it's very difficult to tell the difference between modern fakes and the real thing. Do you feel that you can always tell the difference?

VERMEULE: Well, since genuine Cycladic idols tend to be broken into three, at the neck, and at the knees, to be placed in tombs, that's one [thing to watch for], though there's no reason a forger can't break one to make it look more authentic. They are pretty simple and therefore have been easy to fake in the past. The Greeks have them made in France and then they take them to Greece, to the islands, and they get a man with a Naxian or a Parian accent, who goes to the dealer in Shoe Lane, in Athens, and sells them. So they make a circuit involving the proper accent. But there are scientific tests that can be done [on] incrustation. Science helps as well as connoisseurship. You can't be blind to one without thinking of the other, can you? You look under the ultra-violet, the fluorescent, the infra-red, and you do a sample.

SMITH: Did you work with William Young's department here to figure these things

out?

VERMEULE: Oh, yes. And we've worked since with his successors: Lambertus van Zelst, who went off to the Smithsonian, and, currently, Arthur Beale. For metallic sciences, Richard Newman, up in the lab, is superb testing the metals and the composition of works of art.

LYONS: Do you run almost any acquisition, or potential acquisition, by the lab?

VERMEULE: Any acquisition that costs over a certain amount of money must go through the lab, but we generally run them all through, because whether it cost \$3,000 or \$10,000, I'd feel hurt if an acquisition turned out to be a clinker.

SMITH: Do you have the same problem in coins? Is there an industry of forging classical coins?

VERMEULE: Good old instinct takes over, but the science of forgery in coins has not stood still. Dies are created by the electro-photographic process, and you can even create a new die that hasn't existed for a coin like a twelve drachma piece of Syracuse by superimposing several dyes on each other, and that's really hard [to determine]. Leading coin dealers in Europe have been fooled, but you just have to be very, very careful.

SMITH: So if you see a coin, let's say a twelve drachma, that has never been found before, do you get excited or do you get suspicious?

VERMEULE: I tend to get excited, because I'm probably a naive fool, but most of

the time I'm right. The big hoard that's called the "hoard of the century" that Mr. Koch of America's cup fame bought, which is being litigated by the Turkish government, contains coins that are unique—big, showy new dies for ten drachma pieces in Athens, and new coins for the people up in Thrace, and for the Greek Islands. But then there's a lot of evidence as to just where that hoard came from; it was discovered in a big jar in southwest Turkey. Everybody knows it was discovered in a big jar in southwest Turkey, and even the Kurds, who were involved in the intermediary stage of it, stood right in this office and told my wife it came from a big jug. I think we asked, "Did you save any of the jug?" They think it's somewhere around. ¹[Research in 1996, however, seems to indicate Mr. Koch's coins were seen and known a decade before the southwest Turkey find(s). They could have come from Crete or Cyrenaica.]

LYONS: Do you teach students how to look and read a piece, to look and analyze?

VERMEULE: Yes, you can I think. But they have to be in the presence of pieces a fairly lengthy amount of time; you just can't rush them out to a gallery and say, "Look at that." It's like Marion True or Michael Padgett; they have to hang around the department for a while. And they can teach me, too, because they see things that I don't see.

¹The following bracketed comments were added by Cornelius Vermeule during his review of the transcript.

SMITH: What about the Getty kouros as an archaeological problem? It is an example that we've discussed with a number of people.

VERMEULE: Oh, I told John Walsh the first moment I looked at the pictures—I've never even seen the piece—"Don't buy it." He paid no attention and went right on ahead. I think it's [a fake] because it's made up of eclectic parts. You can see the stylistic differences; it's got hair from the beginning of the sixth century and feet from the end of the sixth century.

SMITH: And there's no historical precedent for styles getting mixed up that way?

VERMEULE: Not that much. You can see just what happened; you can see that the chappie who made it, or the chappies who made it, flipped the pages of Miss Richter's *kouroi* [book] and they said, "We like this, we like this, we like that." That's an easy call for me.

SMITH: And that's something that your eye tells you, based on your historical knowledge?

VERMEULE: Yes, and based on the fact that the hair belongs to the period of the Sounian kouroi and the lower body belongs to the period of the Anavysos kouros, and there's seventy-five years difference between the two.

SMITH: Have you ever passed up something that you then later wished you had gotten because of doubts about authenticity that were later resolved?

VERMEULE: I'm trying to think. There have been some things we've tested and

tested and tested. I can think of one piece that we almost let get away. It's a portrait up in the Roman courtyard there that we acquired the first year I was here, in 1957. The tests were negative because it had lain in the sand at the mouth of the Tiber and had been cleaned over and over again by the natural action of the sand. Once we realized this—Mr. Young found pieces of sand in the interstices—why, we were happy, but we could have let that go, and we would have been sad.

LYONS: Are there forger's workshops that are well known to curators, so that they recognize the hallmarks of certain hands?

VERMEULE: Oh, absolutely. The piece I was talking about is this head here; it's the Emperor Numerianus, 282 to 284 A.D. I published this in a big study in the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* and had a lot of fun with it, but it could have gotten away.

SMITH: Your involvement in fieldwork archaeology has been primarily as an observer, I assume.

VERMEULE: I'm a voyeur, not a *toucheur*.

SMITH: Could you define for us what you think what makes a good archaeological argument?

VERMEULE: Argument?

SMITH: Yes, like somebody says, "This is this, and not that." What makes a good argument in the field of archaeology?

VERMEULE: I suppose conflicting chronologies, lack of evidence on one side and

more evidence on the other. Gee, that's a hard one to answer. The date of the Trojan Wars, for instance, is one of the biggest arguments going on now: Were they early, around 1450, or late, around 1150, or were there two sets of wars? I think that's something that there's plenty of conflict about, plenty of people burying the hatchets in each other's hind ends.

SMITH: And from your point of view, what constitutes good evidence and what constitutes junk?

VERMEULE: There's a combination of many evidences: there's historical evidence, there's evidence that the people in the Hittite world in central Asia Minor had contact with formulas from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Many think Homer may not be an actual person; he may be a verb: to "homer" an epic. Two thousand years from now, we'll use the word "Homer" to refer to Babe Ruth or Micky Mantle. All the great home-run hitters will be one generic baseball player called "Homer." [laughter]

SMITH: But you're in the field of archaeology, having to present things to the museum-going public. How do you select out of these debates what you think is relevant to the museum public, and what might be relevant to how you present your materials? Because you do present your materials with both a historical and a formal emphasis.

VERMEULE: One tries to walk the tightrope and not go spinning off into the canyon. That's about all I can say; it's a certain instinct, and evidence. You read a lot

about the "ages of Homer" and so forth.

SMITH: Okay, well, instinct is a little hard to pinpoint.

VERMEULE: It's instinct coupled with science. For instance, Mabel Lang's work, *War Story into Wrath Story*: she takes the wrath of Achilles and reads all these articles, and *Lydia Between East and West*, by Walter Burckert. She looks at the chronology of heavy bronze tools from Knossos in the last period of its active habitation. And she puts it all together and adds it all up. I shouldn't say it's "instinct," that is a bad word; I should say "perception."

SMITH: What do you think in your professional career have been the most important changes that your generation of archaeologists have brought to the field?

VERMEULE: Well, one person brought it, and that was Michael Ventris, when he deciphered linear B, in 1951 I believe, because it showed that the later Mycenaeans and Minoans were Greeks, that they used the Greek language. There was a reference to "Achilles the swineherd" on one of the tablets. Of course maybe that swineherd was just named after the great Achilles, the way you can have George Washington Jones.

SMITH: How would you assess the "new archaeology"? Do you follow that?

VERMEULE: Some of it I do, and some of it I don't. I don't want to be an old f-o-g-y. New archaeology is pretty embrative of an awful lot of things. Of course I admire the use of scientific tests, but I don't know if I can buy all the sociological

developments that go with the new archaeology: the socio- inter-critic, excentric, un-centric whatnot. That may be a little bit too much.

SMITH: What is it about that in particular that you [dispute]?

VERMEULE: I just think that people aren't that smart, perhaps. They weren't back in Homer's time. They lived their happy lives and made their contributions and passed away. Maybe we're putting too much into what people think of people in certain phases of antiquity. I have no doubt that we're right about the cleverness of people in Julius Caesar's time. I've no doubt that Nero was a mean and self-centered personality and Caligula was around the bend; all of that is well documented, but when it comes to people in the Bronze Age who we really don't know anything about, I can be a little skeptical.

LYONS: Are you referring to attempts to look at gender in the Bronze Age—those kinds of sociological studies?

VERMEULE: Well, I'm all for gender. It's a correct thing now. During World War II, in the outfit I served with in the Pacific, I had a female captain over me, a female major over her, and there was a female lieutenant colonel. I had to go all the way up to General Willoughby, MacArthur's G2, before I got to a man. You can't teach at Bryn Mawr College without respecting gender.

LYONS: What about the structuralist or semiotic approaches that someone like Herbert Hoffmann would adopt to vase iconography? What is your reaction to that

kind of work—the French school?

VERMEULE: Herbert Hoffmann was here as our assistant curator for a number of years. I'm just going to have to wring my hands and say it's beyond my feeble powers of comprehension. There are a lot of people that write things of that nature. Has he written a book, or articles?

LYONS: Well, books. There's *Sexual/Asexual Pursuit*, and more recent things, too.

VERMEULE: Oh, yes. Well, I'm happy to live in the world of the reign of the phallus, just so long as I have an umbrella. [laughter] How to dismiss a whole new school of thought with a one-liner.

SMITH: What did Hoffmann do here while he was working for you? What were his responsibilities?

VERMEULE: He did a volume of our vase catalog, the *corpus vasorum*—very good work. His family lived in Newburyport, so he used to commute home on the train.

Oh, Dietrich Felix von Bothmer will tell you a wonderful story about Herbert Hoffmann. Dietrich Felix von Bothmer came to America tourist class in 1939 on the same ship on which the Hoffmann family traveled from Vienna, first class: the baron, the baroness, and the baby boy. Dietrich will never let people forget that.

SMITH: A colleague of mine at Michigan was saying that your wife has been very important in terms of redefining how we understand the Greek conception of death, and that seems to me the sort of thing I was getting at in terms of how your

generation of archaeologists by plugging away either at the theory or at the nuts and bolts, have been rethinking our conception of ancient society and ancient peoples. Do you have any insight as to how she arrived at her reconceptualization of death?

VERMEULE: She looks at the material evidence and reads the texts, and puts the two together; she's great at reading texts. I see her poring over her *Iliad* all the time, in its original form.

SMITH: The oldest form that we have at present, I guess.

VERMEULE: Yes. So I think it's a natural thing to have arrived at this. Her book [*Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*] was her Sather Lectures at Berkeley. She did a volume on the shaft graves [at Mycenae] in the Cincinnati studies, and I think that revved her up for the Sather Lectures.

SMITH: Did you discuss these findings or this work at home? Did you two share your work?

VERMEULE: No no. I know my name, my rank, and my serial number, and it's far down on the list. There are plenty of people she can discuss her work with. She goes to the Cambridge Scientific Club, and all the Wally Gilberts of this world discuss it. She doesn't need her poor old husband challenging her.

SMITH: This switches back to the museum connections, but I wanted to discuss the role of collaboration and competition between major museums—I guess between you, the Metropolitan, and the Getty. You have done a major publication with the Getty

and you have been a consultant for them.

VERMEULE: Yes, I did their catalog of sculpture, and Norman Neuerberg did the mosaics. I've always cherished my relations with Malibu, going back to the early director who had been director in Detroit. His name slipped my mind. Then there was Herbert Stothart and Paul Wescher was another one. But the one I'm thinking of was even before Paul Wescher. We've always got along very well. He was a scholar of fifteenth-century Flemish painting. And of course there was that sweet man, the British architect whose wife died of cancer, Stephen Garrett. She was a very dear lady; she used to wait on the tables when we had parties at the Getty to make us feel warm and loved. And then of course there's been John Walsh, who incidentally was in the same class at Exeter as Ted [Theodore E.] Stebbins, our American painting curator, and John Joseph Herrmann, Jr., who was known at Exeter as "Jack the Wrestler." I think he's out of earshot. Oh, and Ashton Hawkins was in the same class. Exeter's a big place.

SMITH: What about your relationship with the Fogg and the [Isabella Stewart] Gardner [Museum]?

VERMEULE: I did the catalog of ancient sculpture for the Gardner, and I did the catalog of ancient sculpture with Amy Brauer for the Fogg, so I've had wonderful relations with them. The Gardner catalog is divided into ancient, by yours truly, medieval by Walter Cahn of Yale, and Renaissance by the late regretted "Bump"

[Rollin van N.] Hadley, whose picture is up there with Alan Shestack, who died much before his time. When Amy and I [were working] on the Harvard collection, I'd go home from here almost every day at noon and walk down to the square and work on the catalog and then walk back home again.

SMITH: Would you advise them on purchases?

VERMEULE: They've asked me in recent years, and George Hanfmann, my mentor, used to ask me. David Mitten has been very good about sharing advice and information, and we do the same thing with him.

SMITH: So you would say that the Boston Museum community works well together?

VERMEULE: Yes, and the same is true out at Wellesley, too. My wife was director of the Wellesley College Art Museum for a while, and we did an article in *Archaeology* magazine on all their sculptures, or most of them, and advised them on acquisitions.

SMITH: There was an organization that you have been the president and chairman of, which is the International Community to Save the Jewish Catacombs of Rome.

VERMEULE: Well, you know the Jewish catacombs are distinct from the Christian catacombs, filled with old testament paintings and menorahs and whatnot. They were under the aegis of the Vatican, but the Vatican just didn't have the money to handle everything equal level, so they transferred the Jewish catacombs to the Chief Rabbi of

Rome, and he turned to a group of Bostonians and others, and we raised money to repair them and to protect them from seepage. One of the best Jewish catacombs is out in the Villa Torlonia. They never knew it, but Mussolini and Hitler would goose-step right above the catacombs. Both sides of the pathway up to the villa are lined with sarcophagi with Jewish motifs on them. So we thought that was kind of amusing.

SMITH: How did you get involved in that? What were the connections that led you to become so active in that particular [project]?

VERMEULE: I was writing a book on the Jewish experience in Roman art, which is somewhere around here, and one thing led to another. Florence Wolsky, in our department, is the managing director now of the organization.

SESSION TWO: 14 NOVEMBER, 1995

[Tape III, Side One]

SMITH: You were mentioning that on your way home from Japan you went west to Egypt and then Palestine, or what then became Israel.

VERMEULE: Yes, I had an opportunity to do it on a series of travel orders, and it seemed like a wonderful chance to resee a part of the world I had seen in 1935 but hadn't seen since. So much had happened, and it beat just sailing across the placid Pacific and landing under the Golden Gate Bridge, or something like that. So I made my way west and found people that I'd known from my childhood schooling in England and from other such experiences.

One [person I met] was lieutenant colonel J. B. Ward-Perkins, who later became famous as a historian of Roman architecture. For many years he was director of the British School in Rome. He had come back to Egypt and Cyrenaica to organize the antiquities of Cyrene, which were under the control of the British as a result of the conquest of North Africa. With him was a Major Denys Haynes, who later became keeper at the British Museum. I'd known Denys before the war briefly, but I hadn't known John Bryan Ward-Perkins, though I could have met him at the [British] Museum. Of course the great Sir Mortimer Wheeler was there and he and Emily became very good friends when she was digging in the Agora.

As I talk about all of this, I'm thinking of the book, *The Rape of Europa*, by

[Lynn H. Nicholas], who lives in Washington. The book is all about the confiscations of art treasures by the Nazis, the high jinx of Herman Goering, the recoveries of works of art from the salt mines, and also the attempt to prevent destruction of great monuments in the heat of battle. For instance, I remember Frank[lin] Ludden, who later taught with me in the fine arts department at the University of Michigan, and his wife, who was the daughter of Mehmet Aga-Oglu, a great Turkish archaeologist and scholar, also at the University of Michigan. Frank Ludden was a captain in Arts and Monuments during the Normandy invasion, and he single-handedly rode into that square in front of Chartres Cathedral just as the big guns were lowering to blow it into the twenty-first century.

The Arts and Monuments people turned out to be great heroes for what they did. They got to the Arno almost as fast as the Germans were retreating northward and they started to pick up the pieces of the bridges that had been blown up, and then they found people like Marchesa Iris Origo, who was holed up in her villa in the hills, and Bernard Berenson, who was similarly positioned. All of this was chronicled in this book, *The Rape of Europa*, and a very few of these people are still alive. Mason Hammond, who was a great hero in protection and rescue, riding around in his battered British jeep, is still active, living on Brattle Street in Cambridge.

After the war, when I went back to the American Academy in Rome—I was actually at the British School doing graduate work for two years—there were all

these wonderful tales about the liberation of Rome. The one that I remember the best, which I've never seen written down, is about Henry [T.] Rowell, who was a very macho professor of Latin at Johns Hopkins, and who like all macho men seized upon World War II as a wonderful chance to escape from academe. I think he became a colonel, and I think he was one of the first ones to storm into Rome in his jeep, ahead of the troops, actually. He went dashing up to the American Academy and he went charging into the library. He was in his combat outfit, with his pistols on his sides and his hand grenade in his lapel, and all the things that the Patton clones would assume to wear. There, sitting at the desk in the library, the same desk that he had sat in for the last forty or fifty years, was Professor Albert van Buren, the grand old man of the Accademia Americana, and he looked up and said, "Henry, you never answered my question about the villa of Horace and its southern topography." Just like that.

SMITH: That's wonderful.

VERMEULE: There are many, many stories. I don't think that people in the museum world in 1995 [necessarily] get narrowly focused, but sometimes they focus on different things, and one thing I hate to see is this gulf opening between the scholarly people at a museum and the administrators, who often perceive them to be incompetent. That [problem] started here about 1973, '74. The myth was promulgated that curators were crybabies living in ivory towers, and they were unable to manage. The other side of the coin was that the administrators *could* manage the

money and they *weren't* crybabies. Of course this museum is a good indication that they didn't do any of these things until just recent years.

I don't know if you saw the latest issue of *Boston* magazine, the one with the baseball picture on the cover. There's a wonderful article by the former wife of Alan Trustman of the Crown caper fame, on this museum and its current aspirations, with pictures of the director and the president and so forth, and there are quotes, generally anonymous, from curators saying that the era of identifying curators with professors is over. Curators from now on are going to be just like the mouse pads of an Apple computer.

SMITH: But when you started out it was actually unusual for curators to have Ph.D.s. Now I think it's unusual for the opposite to occur. The expansion of graduate training has been a one of the key factors in the last forty years, I guess.

VERMEULE: People in the ancient disciplines—Egypt, and the classical disciplines—in my generation had Ph.D.s, and I always said if you didn't have a Ph.D. you couldn't teach permanently on a professorial level. Yet, as I look around the building, I [realize] there aren't all that many more now that have Ph.D.s. There's one notorious example of a curator who ran a major department here in this museum. He was told by Harvard that his M.A. was terminal; that kind of lowers respect, but then I think that's been lost sight of, because curators have been so trampled on ever since. When you're marching people to Auschwitz, why, you don't differentiate between a

Ph.D., an M.D. It was a time for a brutal leveling, a brutal liquidation, a brutal solution. It's amazing how many of the great German scholars who came to America in the era when Walter Cook was director of the Institute of Fine Arts at New York said, "Hitler shook the tree and I collected the apples," referring to many people—many people of that era who came here had been combat heroes in World War I, like Jakob Rosenberg at Harvard, or Richard Krautheimer at the Institute. They weren't just sitting around in offices in Berlin; they were right up there with no quiet on the Western Front.

SMITH: Since you were living in New York did you ever go to lectures at the Institute?

VERMEULE: Well, it was really just getting started, but I lived only four blocks away and I met some of the professors.

SMITH: Would you have known Karl Lehmann?

VERMEULE: Oh, I knew him very well, but I met him after I had switched back from far eastern languages into archaeology. When he died, I taught Phyllis Lehmann's classes for five years and one semester at Smith. Oh, I was a devoted disciple of Karl Lehmann. Of course many [émigrés] didn't come to the Institute until just about the time I was in boarding school, about to grab that semester at Harvard and go off in World War II. Many went to Rome first, as Karl Lehmann did, before coming to America. Lehmann always said his book on Thomas Jefferson was his

green card to come to America. Richard Krautheimer, who was John Herrmann's teacher, was very kind to me, and so was his wife, Trude Krautheimer-Hess. And there were Germans who had taken refuge in the Vatican: Hans Hess and Hermine Speier. There's a tendency to kind of make it sound as if the Pacelli Pope [Pius XII] in World War II stood aside with his mouth open wide while millions went to the crematoria, but the Vatican did everything it could to save individual scholars and others who could make it to their protection. I think the Pope was very conscious of what Stalin said about him, if you remember: "How many battalions does he have?"

SMITH: What was it particularly about Lehmann's approach that you liked? Was it him as a person or was there an intellectual quality?

VERMEULE: As a person, his broad outlook. He taught a course in Egyptian art at the Institute, but he always told us he hated it because he didn't read the hieroglyphs and he hated to teach any language that he didn't know. [Ernst] Kantorowicz was another great figure at the Institute. He had been in Turkey with Liman von Sanders in World War I, and he managed the Turkish railway system I think. He was filled with stories, and he was very kind to me. Karl Lehmann would talk about people like Hiller von Gertrigen and how he took his viva with him. He was all boned up on everything that a classical architectural historian should know, and Gertrigen said, "I have just one question for you." And he asked for the classical name of an obscure mountain in northwest Asia Minor. Fortunately Karl knew it. I forget the name of

the art historian who took his doctorate at Harvard, and on his viva sat Leonard Opdycke and Chandler Post. It was on Spanish art, with an emphasis on the Spanish influence in Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From Leonard Opdycke this [fellow] expected a question like, "Where is such and such a painting that was prominent in this connection?" Instead, Leonard Opdycke asked him one question: "Name all the paintings by Velazquez in America."

SMITH: Did he answer it?

VERMEULE: I think he tried valiantly; of course, those were the days before Federico Zeri and others made lists. It may have been a might hard.

SMITH: Yes, but of course if that's your field maybe you would know.

VERMEULE: You'd be expected to know. Then of course there are the dubious attributions; there was the great Velazquez that was hung for the exhibition of 1876 in Fairmont Park with those other big baroque paintings. When you went there and saw them you thought, "Gosh, here's one of the great repositories of baroque art in the world, and then you'd get some very sober-minded person like Bernice Davidson pointing out that most of them were old copies, like the Guercinos hanging in many English country houses.

SMITH: Did you have much connection with the Princeton art and archaeology department?

VERMEULE: Yes, my uncle, Francis Frederick Adams Comstock was there for

much of his life, the same one who also restored the old houses in Newport for Doris Duke because of their tobacco connection. My grandparents retired to Princeton; they had a big house at 32 Brattle Street, next door to James and Mimsy McCredie. I had another uncle who was a vice president of Princeton. He had been a journalist from Kansas City, and when he retired from being an editor of the old *New York Sun* he came and really invented public relations for Ivy League universities. He and his wife, who was my mother's baby sister, lived on Mercer Street, and the family still has the house, which is wonderful because it's the house everybody knows in Princeton as having the great apple orchard in front of it. Then there was Uncle Franny and his wife, Aunt Darlington, and he was right there in McCormick Hall with the likes of my father's classmate, Richard Stillwell, who was professor of architecture and archaeology, and the Byzantinist Albert Friend, and a host of others.

Oh yes, I went to Princeton a lot, also because of the coin collection in the library. They let me play with it unsupervised, and I had a wonderful time cataloging it. And there was old David Magie who wrote the heroic two volumes, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, which is a classic, as is T. R. S. Broughton's *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*; both men spent their lifetimes on one book. Howard Crosby Butler may have been still alive in my childhood I think, the one who had worked on all the churches of Syria and worked at Sardis before the First World War and then afterwards. Of course, T. Leslie Shear, Sr., the excavator of the Agora [of Athens],

was there. They all went to the Prettybrook Club and we all swam together. George Forsyth, who was married to one of Allan Marquand's daughters, was there, and Blake Forsyth, their daughter, was a contemporary of mine.

SMITH: Now is it because you've written about Greek imperial coins that you have looked into Byzantine history and studies? It seems unusual for a classical archaeologist.

VERMEULE: Well, my life is flashing back over me because I received a letter from Pindar Press saying they want to publish a volume of my *kleine Schriften*. They've done it with others. I think Richard Brilliant has already had this done, and I'm not sure who else, but I did see a list. So I'm busy collecting all the *kleine Schriften* and trying to pick out the ones that would stand by themselves and make part of a wonderful book and not just be an ego trip—I mean a wonderful book insofar as these things can be wonderful. I suddenly remembered having written about the forefathers of the Greek church for the journal of the Greek theological seminary, and other things that one did that were out of one's purview and one sort of forgets about. It's like writing on Giovanni Bologna's *Flying Mercury* and its relation to the medallions of Leone Leoni—that sort of thing.

SMITH: Was it the numismatics that led you into these other areas, like your book on classical antiquity in Renaissance and modern Europe [*European Art and the Classical Past*]?

VERMEULE: Yes, it was a little bit, but it was the same fascination for medallions that Cyriac of Ancona had when he visited that Venetian ship captain off the coast of Asia Minor. The Venetian ship captain showed him his medals and Cyriac of Ancona was much impressed with the collection—ancient Greek imperial medals, probably Greek coins, and things [like Byzantine seals] from the Middle Ages.

SMITH: Why don't we talk a little bit about your books, then, since we've moved into the subject of your writing. We did talk about the numismatic books, and Japanese coinage in particular. *The Bibliography of Applied Numismatics*[in the *Fields of Greek and Roman Archaeology and the Fine Arts*] is your second book.

VERMEULE: Yes, and that was published when I was teaching at Bryn Mawr. I did it while working in London when I had access to the splendid card files in the British Museum. It was an attempt to put together in different categories all the articles that demonstrated the uses of numismatics in other fields. Not just pure coins and die links and whatnot, but what I've always loved is coins as instruments of understanding sculpture and painting and history. I was amazed to find out how many people had done different aspects of this. It formed a self-contained unit which I've never wished to update, particularly when Dietrich Felix von Bothmer reminded me—I was always often getting the great maxims of Sir John Beazley second-hand from brother Dietrich—that when somebody asked Beazley if he should compile a bibliography, Beazley replied [*parce* Dietrich], "Ze people zat compile bibliographies are better off

doing something else: manual labor." [laughter] So that kind of led me to think that good bibliographies, with thought content, were much better.

My very first article, in 1944, was a bibliographical sketch of Henry Cohen. Henry Cohen wrote the great eight-volume corpus of Roman coins that was the standard reference up until the British Museum catalogs started to appear before and after World War II. Henry, who was French but never wanted his name to be Henri, also wrote operas. Then the next year I had the big thrill of publishing a New York transit token, the first token that had just come out, in *The Numismatic Review*. In 1946 we did a Japanese prize medal, and in 1947 we did the Japanese wound badge, and Japanese necessity trade pieces, and then we kept off the pen until 1950; we had been organizing the Harvard University Coin Room, and we did a report on that for the Harvard alumni bulletin. We published a rare coin, which Howland Shaw, I guess the great nephew of the gloried Major Robert Gould Shaw, who was Assistant Secretary of State, gave Harvard.

Then we began to break out in 1952 and we wrote an article on Roman imperial gems, but they were ones related to coins, and then in that [same] year we wrote "An Imperial Medallion of Leone Leoni and Giovanni Bologna's *Flying Mercury*," which I mentioned. In 1953 the Japanese coinage book came out, and by then we were busy in the United Kingdom, so we wrote, for *Archaeology* magazine, "Sir John Soane: His Classical Antiquities." Then in 1954, while still occasionally

doing things on coins, we did a catalog of the statuary at Cobham Hall in Kent. In 1955 we were pretty big on the contents of British country houses and Greek sculpture of the fifth century and so forth, so we began to get yanked out of our narrowness, and the article on the dal Pozzo-Albani drawings of classical antiquities in the Royal Library of Windsor Castle and the British Museum, encouraged by Karl Lehmann, appeared in the *Art Bulletin* in 1956. So all this business about publishing the dal Pozzo-Albani drawings at Windsor and in the British Museum with Olivetti's money all follows in yours truly's footsteps, because I had done a full catalog of all of them, except for the Italian Renaissance and later drawings, like the Leonardos and the Poussins; that all belonged to Anthony Blunt and his circle.

SMITH: Was it that work that then put you on the road to doing *European Art and the Classical Past* ?

VERMEULE: Yes, I think it was the interaction of all these things, because *European Art and the Classical Past* relies on dal Pozzo-Albani drawings of classical antiquities.

SMITH: You dedicated that book to Chandler Post. Was there a particular reason for doing that? Did he influence you?

VERMEULE: Absolute love. I took his Renaissance art course after the war, but when I came back from London and was at Bryn Mawr, I used to come up to Harvard on weekends and I always had dinner with him on Saturday night. He took a

great fancy to Emily after we were married, and she just loved him. Of course people forget that he was not only the great historian of Spanish art, but he wrote the book on sculpture in Europe and America with Dean Chase, who was my predecessor as the *locum tenens* here. He also taught regularly in the classics department, a course on Plutarch and Pindar and so forth. Every few years he'd go off to Yale and teach in their English Department. Chauncey [Brewster] Tinker, who was his opposite number at Yale, would come to Harvard and teach Spanish literature here and Chandler would teach Italian literature there.

"Uncle Chandler," as we called him, was one of those people with so many different aspects to his life. In World War I he had been an adviser to the Italian army in Italy, and he had witnessed the debacle at Caporetto on the Piave, and the heroic rallying of the Italian troops to stem the putative invasion of the Austro-Hungarians all over again. He was from Detroit, and he never forgot his roots. The Post house still stood in Detroit and I used to go and see it when I taught at Michigan. I don't know if it's still standing, their ancestral house. They had another one in Ypsilanti, and that I know is still standing. Uncle Chandler was very conscious of his Michigan roots.

SMITH: Classicism has been a very fluid concept, so when you were writing that book, how did you decide how you were going to define classicism? Was that a difficult problem for you?

VERMEULE: I'd been thinking about it a lot before writing it. I gave those chapters as Lowell Lectures here at the Museum. I was trying to look at the art of every different age from medieval on and relate it to the art of antiquity. Others of course took this up, like Sir Walter Oakeshott, who was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford. He wrote a whole book on the classical tradition in medieval art, and Benjamin Rowland, my guru, wrote a similar book right after mine, on pretty much the same thing. His widow Lucy comes every Thursday for lunch. Uncle Chandler used to love to identify all the people who were painting or sculpting together in the Italian Renaissance, and one of the questions that he would ask on an exam would be something like "Who was working where and on what in 1487 in Rome?" Or 1495 might be better. You had to know that Pintoricchio was making a mess of the Sistine Chapel and somebody else was working in the Villa Giulia and so forth—who was working side by side.

SMITH: What kind of relation did you have to the Warburg tradition? That's the classic, probably the most written about position on the connection of classical antiquity to succeeding civilizations. Did you read Aby Warburg, [Erwin] Panofsky, or any of those people?

VERMEULE: I certainly used the Warburg library, and when I was a teaching assistant to Martin Robertson at University College, London, he would routinely lecture at the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, which were then together in the old

house that had been partly bombed, in Portman Square. That was before the Warburg moved to its present majestic location with the Institute of Classical Studies, up beyond University College. Yes, I was very conscious of it. When I was working in the Soane museum, John Summerson and our curator, Dorothy Stroud, who wrote books on British landscape artists like Capability Brown that are still standard, were always on the telephone with the Warburg people and they were always getting me together with Nikolaus Pevsner, and Miss [Gertrud] Bing, who was director of the Warburg Institute in its later days. We used to go out to Dulwich, where they all lived, for dinner, and once we came here we did it all with Hanns Swarzenski, because of course he took the Warburg tradition in with his mother's milk and his father had been connected with it in Germany before coming here, and they were all of the same kind of ambiance.

SMITH: So was iconology something that was of interest to you?

VERMEULE: Well I didn't pursue it the way [William Heckscher] did in his famous article on "Bernini's Elephant and Obelisk" in which every aspect of the elephant and every aspect of the obelisk were explored. I could never quite take down fully Millard Meiss's interminable studies on the egg—his "addendum ovologicum" sort of thing. One couldn't ignore these things, and I certainly read them, but then there were a number of free-minded Brits who didn't buy the deep iconology. People like Charles Mitchell, who was a stalwart of the Warburg Institute, was as un-Germanic as

possible. He came to Bryn Mawr to teach and then retired back to England. Ernst Kitzinger, who was at the British Museum through World War II, after he left the Hitler world, wrote that wonderful guide to the medieval collection that was one of the first good British Museum guides. I think his later books, like *Byzantine Art in the Making*, showed that he could span the spectrum.

What I'm trying to say is that one can focus on the iconological aspect, which might also be called the Germanic aspect, of the Warburg, and of course that's what made it famous—its files and everything, in days when there weren't computers. It was like the Index of Christian Art at Princeton, which was organized by people like Albert Friend. I don't think they were thinking of the Warburg tradition, but when Friend was doing his great article which appeared in the *Art Bulletin* on evangelist portraits in Byzantine art, he had photographs of all of them. He climbed up on a step ladder, and he had several of his graduate students down below. It was like those movies showing the plotting of the German planes over Britain in World War II. And Friend would say, "Move that Matthew closer to that Mark," and whatnot. When they got all lined up the way he liked them, why, he then published them.

SMITH: We didn't talk about *The Goddess Roma* [*in the Art of the Roman Empire*].

VERMEULE: That's a cross-fertilization, because it's the goddess Roma in every aspect of Roman art. Of course it emphasized coins and gems because they provide the chronological links, but there were such pleasures as finding the great hunk of the

Constantinian Dea Roma lying in the cellar of San Francesca Romana or the Temple of Venus and Roma in Rome, and the Temple of Hadrian. I was going around looking at all the historical reliefs that had Roma in them.

I was going around with great people that I admired, like Enrico Parabeni, one of the great liberals of Florentine aristocracy, and one of the great liberals of Italian archaeology. His father, Roberto, had been a pretty faithful servant of Mussolini, but never a vindictive one; he never sent people off to the Ardentine caves and whatnot. Enrico did his best to protect every Italian of Jewish faith he knew, and he helped people like Arnaldo Momigliano, who was a teacher of mine, escape to London, to University College. Roberto Weiss, who was the great scholar of Italian Renaissance medals also came from Italy to London. But Parabeni and I would go around and we would try to track down the sources of dal Pozzo-Albani drawings. I couldn't get into closed monasteries like the Villa Giustiniani, but Enrico was single and he had the ability to look like he was a monk in Borghese, and he opened the doors and let us in so we could see things. We would go into Santa Cecilia and Trastevere and see the sculptures in the cloister. But if I just came and knocked on the door and said I was an American graduate student in bad Italian, well, I wouldn't have gotten beyond the [gate].

SMITH: Did you do any photo documentation when you were doing this?

VERMEULE: Yes I did, but there were just so many dal Pozzo drawings, it was best

just to note where they were and what they were. It was amazing how many of the objects had been photographed by the German Archaeological Institute on the Via Sardegna, but without any dal Pozzo connection. So generally I'd go there and just mull through the photothèque. There was a great Russian Jewish lady, Raissa Calza whose husband, Guido Calza, was the excavator of Ostia. Her sister married Prince Obolenski, and they lived in London. I would see them in London and Oxford and then when I was in Rome I'd see Raissa there. [calling] John, did you ever remember Raissa Calza? Was she still alive when you were in Rome?

HERRMANN: Yes, I had a meeting with her on the subject of my dissertation. A smart old lady. Krautheimer used to tell me how beautiful she was.

VERMEULE: Yes, she was a dancer as a young woman.

[Tape III, Side Two]

HERRMANN: She [Raissa Calza] said quite a few witty things on the subject of why late antiquity was neglected in Italian archaeological circles, and it's mostly late antique things [that] are excavated by classical archaeologists. She said that the classical archaeologists see the third century as decline, the fourth century as decadence, and the fifth century as nothing. [laughter]

VERMEULE: Like Bernard Berenson.

HERRMANN: Yes, that viewpoint.

VERMEULE: And there was that great article she wrote when she discovered the

statue of Saint Helena in the Museo Capitolino. She began her article quoting from I think Pope Alexander VII, who said in a pronuncimento, "I am sending this statue away from the Vatican because it represents the worst of late pagan taste," not realizing it was the greatest female Saint of Rome. Those were people that made it exciting.

SMITH: You then moved on to *Roman Imperial Art in Greece and Asia Minor*, in 1968, and then *Greek Sculpture and Roman Taste[:The Purpose and Setting of Graeco-Roman Art in Italy and the Greek Imperial East]* in 1977.

VERMEULE: That later book was the Jerome Lectures at the University of Michigan: *Sculturi Greci e Gusto Romano*. I remember it well. I gave the same lectures at the Academy in Rome, and in a sense it was explaining Roman commercialism and how the Romans took one Greek masterpiece, like one of the Amazons at Ephesus, and made many copies of it, putting them around in [different] locations. I think one of the best illustrations of that is the canopus at Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, where Hadrian had the *gusto romano* to take the caryatids from the Erechtheum and put them alongside his canal, and then he took those fat Sileni from someplace like Agrigento and put them in a *tempieto* along his canal. Then down at the end he set up a visual slide quiz for you, with a statue by Pheidias, a statue by Alcamenes, a statue by Myron, and a statue by one of the other fifth-century masters, that sort of thing. Then to be able to cruise down the canal and see two Hellenistic

reclining river gods in the middle of the water, one coming up the Tiber and one the Nile. That was Roman taste.

SMITH: What led you into pursuing that particular topic?

VERMEULE: It was something one saw while tracking down the thousands of classical things that the "Chevalier Dupuis," as we used to call him—Cassiano dal Pozzo—commissioned and collected, I mean old sketchbooks, and commissioned drawings. A lot of people work now on the artists who drew for him, but we've known some hands right from the beginning, like Pietro Testa. Going around and doing this minutely led one to want to synthesize and to see why and where it all fitted in; for instance, why did Roman sarcophagi borrow from the tragedies of Euripides, in terms of what were clearly Hellenistic paintings?

SMITH: Now how did your earlier study of Roman imperial art in Greece and Asia Minor relate to this?

VERMEULE: Well, that related to the travels, and the fact that Emily was excavating at Gordion, and Kültepe [ancient Kanesh], the Assyrian colony north of Caesarean Cappadocia, and she was working on Cyprus, just a hop, skip, and a jump across from southern Asia Minor. We spent a lot of time in Ankara, in the museums, and it just occurred to me that the art of the Roman empire in Asia Minor had not been synthesized, put together in one form.

Partly it's where you are. I've never missed an opportunity to study, and this

is something that Chandler Post always approved of, and the recently departed John Coolidge as well, and W. G. Constable, who was so active in the arts and monuments business in World War II. And Ben Rowland above all. Wherever you were, you studied the art thereof or the art that was collected there. So if I had to be in Constantinople or Ankara I just wasn't just going to go around and do nothing. It's the same with studying neo-classic sculpture in America. You start out in Ann Arbor and Detroit, and you've admired Nydia and Randolph Rogers, and whatnot, and then you go to Cincinnati, and you find more Randolph Rogers, and then you go to Providence and you find that he did the Civil War monument and the statue on the dome of the state house.

SMITH: I haven't seen your list of articles. Have you written about neo-classical sculpture?

VERMEULE: In America, yes—articles in *Antiques* magazine.

SMITH: When you do something like that, to what degree does your training as a classicist help you with what might then be considered more a purely art-historical kind of question?

VERMEULE: Well, I suppose it was all those years of having to learn Chinese and Japanese characters. It created an intensity that teaches one how to do it but makes one want to do something broader. When we were at the army language school in Ann Arbor, we were being so intensely hit with Japanese that once we realized we

were on top of it, some of us would sit in the back of the class and study another language. A friend of mine, who was of American German Jewish origin, was busy studying Norwegian, and three of us sat in another corner with a Boston rabbinical student, Leon Hurvitz, who relaxed by teaching us Yiddish. So there was always this kind of desire to "float like a butterfly but sting like a bee."

SMITH: Now was *Greek and Roman Sculpture in America*, which you did with the Getty, Marion True's project, initially?

VERMEULE: The person who got me to do that was Sandra Knudsen, who is now at the Toledo Museum of Art. She was sometimes known as Sandra Knudsen Morgan. She was editor of publications at the Getty, and she got me to do it, but I had already done at least one article on the subject. The first one, in 1955, appeared in, of all places, the *Michigan Daily*.

SMITH: Really?

VERMEULE: Yes, they did an article with pictures on Greek and Roman sculpture in America. There was the black basalt Sarapis in the Kelsey Museum, and a piece from Detroit. There were only about seven or eight pieces illustrated and I discussed them, but it was designed to whet an appetite [for the possibility] of bringing together a catalog of all the sculpture in America. I'm a lazy old so-and-so now, but I did organize a huge volume, in typescript, trying to track every piece of sculpture in America, and it was Sandy Knudsen who said, "Why not synthesize it, take the best,

and put out a book?" So a lot of what Karl Lehmann would call *Grundlagen* went into it.

SMITH: That's usually the case, isn't it? You build on what your strengths are.

Then you did *Art of Antiquity*, which I guess is a series here.

VERMEULE: Yes, it's a series of different volumes. There's *The Art of the Greek World: Prehistoric through Perikles; From the Late Stone Age and the Early Age of Bronze to the Peloponnesian Wars*, then *Socrates to Sulla[: From the Peloponnesian Wars to the Rise of Julius Caesar]*, and another one going from Caesar to Constantine, or something like that [*Roman Art: Early Republic to Late Empire*].

SMITH: Which was written by somebody else?

VERMEULE: No, that was written by me too.

SMITH: Oh, okay. They didn't have that one at the Stanford library. Volume one deals with Egyptian and Near Eastern art?

VERMEULE: Yes, and that's waiting to appear, it's in page proof. Like Karl Lehmann, I still need a little more help from true Egyptologists, so I don't open my stomatic aperture and insert my podial appendage.

SMITH: So you're writing volume one as well?

VERMEULE: Yes. It includes the Near East, because I'm teaching that sort of thing at Boston College every Fall. We finished Egypt and Mesopotamia about three weeks ago, and just today I finished the Minoans and the Mycenaeans. We looked at

Tyrans, the palace of Nestor at Pylos, and we plunged into the dark ages of the Geometric Period. We're taking a break to deal with the legends of Troy as they are reflected in the arts of the later ancient world, right down to modern times. I think I just stopped by showing them a Judgment of Paris in the museum of the man who had all those fake impressionists and had the guts to get rid of them. He then collected the most wonderful Spanish painting, and they're at Southern Methodist University I believe, isn't it? One of the great collections of Spanish pictures in America.

SMITH: What are you planning on working on now? Do you have a book in formative stages?

VERMEULE: Right around the corner from you, if you slide your chair back you will see it. I'll pull it out. It's an encyclopedia of sites and sculptures. Are there two large volumes?

SMITH: Yes, in binders. It's quite heavy.

VERMEULE: Yes, it's an encyclopaedia of sites and sculptures in the Eastern Mediterranean world. It starts with Romania, Bulgaria, Thrace in Turkey, east of the Evros river, Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, east to the Dura Europos, and Seleuceia, on the Tigris. It tries to deal with each city and with all the sculpture that's been found, so this has been my old man's work for the last several years. It's gotten to be about 1300 pages.

SMITH: Including pictures?

VERMEULE: No, no, just naked text.

SMITH: The area that you deal with is, shall we say, highly unstable, politically, or portions of it.

VERMEULE: But I'm unstable politically, dear Richard. I suddenly realized what shnooks Dole and Gingrich were and what a fine person William Jefferson Clinton is.

SMITH: You mean in the last few days?

VERMEULE: I should have realized sooner, but after all, it took Saint Paul a little while to fall off his horse and discover his true avocation. When I saw, in the post General Powell era, the predatory and salivating behavior of that old Senator Dole and that gross-out senator Gingrich, and I then saw William Jefferson Clinton giving his reasons for vetoing the budget as it had come up—the government had now stopped—I realized that if I had ever thought [well] of these two right-wing whatnots then I would have been more unstable than I am.

SMITH: Oh, okay! [laughter] But, you know, Romania went through a revolution, Bulgaria a less bloody one, and Turkey and Greece have been at war.

VERMEULE: Well, you can always get hit with a car bomb anywhere, including La Guardia Airport, New York, or the World Trade Center. But Emily and I have gone time and again to countries which the American newspapers say are in siege crises, unstable and this and that, and we never noticed it. We were on the Iraqi-Turkish border when Operation Desert Storm began. We'd been over into Iraq, and the only

thing we noticed that was unusual was that the lorries that carry all the supplies on the Berlin to Tehran and Baghdad highways were backed up for thirty miles on either side of the border, which was closed, and people were howling mightily. We went to a hotel in Mardin, in southeastern Turkey, to spend the night, and we wondered what the political situation was. The television set was on the whole evening, but of course it was the World Cup match between Turkey and Czechoslovakia; in other words, the Turks had things in their proper perspective. We then couldn't understand why we couldn't get a plane from the borders of eastern Turkey back to Istanbul. We had to travel five hundred miles eastward to find a Turkish airlines plane that wasn't filled with refugees streaming from here, there, and everywhere, so we could get a seat.

We got to Istanbul and we still didn't understand what was going on. We spent one night there and we then flew on to Athens and then to Crete. It wasn't until we got to Crete and met the Americans who were excavating there [that we learned about the war]. They all said, "Don't you know about the war, how awful it is? Listen to the planes going overhead." And sure enough, you heard nothing the whole night but great big transport planes coming from the United States, touching down at the British bases in Cyprus and then heading on to the Gulf. So I say you can be right where it's at and not know about something. People used to talk about the terrorism on Cyprus in the period of the early 1970s, and we were there, oblivious, with our little children. Every night at least eight bombs would go off. But the two sides, the

supporters of the Greeks and the supporters of the archbishop of Cyprus were very careful not to damage anybody else's property. You didn't blow up the other guy's Mercedes because if he blew up yours you'd have to come up with another \$40,000. So they would put a hole through the wall of his garage when the Mercedes wasn't there. Anyway the only effect of this miniwar we saw was one time when the Cypriot army came roaring into our excavation site at the Mound of Darkness to chase an alleged terrorist who had hid in a house on the edge of the fields. They came roaring in with their Bren gun carriers and this and that, and their Sten guns in their hands and their combat gear on and everything, and I stood there and said, "Hey boys, what's this all about?" I wouldn't say that one can be oblivious to terrorism; certainly you can't go plodding around the national library in Sarajevo without being conscious of the fact that it was half blown apart, but in many parts of the east, if you understand the people, and speak a common language, why they can sense which Americans make good hostages and which don't, and a couple of old broken down archaeologists—forget it.

SMITH: So you just did your work and didn't worry about it. But of course you were fluent in Turkish and modern Greek I guess.

VERMEULE: Yes. Emily, when she is in the mood, is absolutely bilingual, because she's lived so long with Greeks in Turkey, and with Greeks in Greece.

SMITH: I had a couple of follow-up questions from last time. You'd mention you'd

go out to lunch frequently with J. Paul Getty. I was wondering, what did the two of you talk about?

VERMEULE: We talked about ancient art. He clearly knew that I had been surveying the market in England and on the continent too and he did much of his buying in those days from Spink and Son in London. He knew I was down there looking at things and I knew what was in English country houses. I would talk to him about things that he bought without realizing in some cases that they had distinguished histories and provenances. Then he talked occasionally about the oil business, and how he didn't want to get in trouble buying antiquities in Italy because he was trying to [orchestrate] a buy-out of Mattei, the Italian oil consortium.

I liked his style, because he traveled all over the continent in his great old Rolls Royce, just with his chauffeur, and he didn't like the telephone, which I don't like, and he didn't like writing letters, which I don't like. So when there was a big deal coming up, he and the chauffeur would climb out of the car and Mr. Getty would dictate a postcard to the chauffeur, who would mail it off. John Walsh said of me that if you ever get a letter from me it's a forgery, because all you get from me is postcards. I think postcards make for happiness with people. Look at that collection there of postcards that I got sent.

SMITH: I'll have to send you one then.

VERMEULE: Wonderful. Find something unusual and I'll send you back something

unusual.

SMITH: Okay. After you came to this very prestigious position that you have, did Getty come to you and try to get you to be a consultant for him?

VERMEULE: Well, he had Bernard Ashmole as his consultant, as Bernard's biography says. Bernard and I would discuss things that Getty bought, and I would go out to the ranch and look at the things that were there before the museum was built. By then Getty had hired Wilhelm Valentiner, who was one of the Hitler-era titans who came to America and who made fame buying things for Detroit.

SMITH: He had also been at LACMA. He was the person who built the basic collection of Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

VERMEULE: He was director at Malibu, and Paul Wescher was I guess his successor, and he came from a similar background. So by then Mr. Getty had a museum gleaming in his eye, and he had Bernard Ashmole to advise him, and toward the end of Bernard Ashmole's career Robin Symes [of London] was supplying Getty with antiquities for the museum. So I could enjoy all of that, and I utilized a life-long devotion to Bernard Ashmole to discuss things that Mr. Getty was buying or had bought.

SMITH: One of the things you mentioned last time was that when you came here, they wanted you to be an "attack dog," and I don't think we really [delved into that].

VERMEULE: No, *I* wanted to be an attack dog. I felt this collection had stagnated

too long, and I saw museums, notably the Metropolitan, making wonderful acquisitions in Gisela Richter's last era, and Dietrich von Bothmer continuing it, or even Christine Alexander in between Gisela Richter and Dietrich doing it, and I was just plain jealous. I wanted to see some of this wonderful ancient art that was in orbit on the art market or in the auction rooms, come here. So I hit the ground running, man.

SMITH: So collection building is what you meant, then?

VERMEULE: Yes, by being an "attack dog." I use that expression nowadays apropos of the fact that it seems to be unfashionable, just as smoking cigarettes is unfashionable. It's unfashionable to talk about acquisition; you're supposed to talk about outreach and intellectual goals and minority preferences and all the buzzwords and the catchwords of 1995. But when we see a great work of art that we want to come to this collection, why we do everything in our power to buy it. Now there's a head of Julius Caesar that's on the market in New York, in Egyptian basalt, for \$1,000,000 plus. It's spectacular, but not all that spectacular. It came to France in the era of Napoleon along with this head, which is Antonia Minor, the mother of Claudius, the daughter of Mark Anthony and Augustus/Octavian's sister Octavia. Both pieces are quite battered, this is more battered, and John and I both hoped to have this museum buy it, but a lot of people do not wish to face up to a battered woman. That surely is a battered woman, but it's a battered masterpiece. And so,

with a bit of *legerdemain* I got the dealer that had it to sell it to me for \$15,000.

Christine Lillequist at the Metropolitan thinks that this is a better work of Romano-Egyptian art than the head on the art market in New York going for \$1,200,000, or whatever, even though that one comes with terrific expertise from my old buddy and Emily's sometime pupil at Berkeley, John Pollini. This is what I mean when I say if you keep your eyes open, your mind open, and your pocketbook *als minimal gehalt*, why, there are still things you can find.

SMITH: When we talked to von Bothmer, he emphasized, with a sort of nostalgia, the passing of the gentleman collector and the gentleman dealer. He was talking about the early sixties as the period when the transition occurred from gentleman collectors to corporate collectors. He talked in generalized terms about the sort of shark business mentality. Would you agree with that?

VERMEULE: Well, it is a different type of collector, but I think they're still gentlemen or gentlewomen or gentlefolk, and I would be hard put to think whom Dietrich would mean by a gentleman dealer up to the 1960s. I mean we still have Robert Emmanuel Hecht, Jr., who is a well-educated gentleman, and he's prominent as a dealer; and Brian Aitken in New York is a graduate of St. Paul's school and Harvard and wears all the right neckties, and John Herrmann's first wife, Ariel Hamill Herrmann, is certainly a great lady and a dealer, so I think Dietrich is maybe feeling the pinch or the inactivity of retirement and is into revisionary nostalgia. So I don't

did, people will fight to come to see them. But one of the most spectacular things that people lined up outside the museum to see—all the way down to Copley Square—was Queen Mary of England's carpet. It was the carpet that she had woven after World War II, with each knot representing one of the fifty-five thousand casualties in the R.A.F. And John Fitzgerald Kennedy's desk, under which John John played, was put upstairs, and people came to view that as if it were *Whistler's Mother*, which they also came to view in great numbers.

SMITH: How do you feel about those kinds of attractions?

VERMEULE: I think they're fine. They affect the museum in ancillary ways. The people come, they look at Queen Mary's carpet, they look at John Fitzgerald Kennedy's desk, and then they may wander off into other galleries and look at something else and learn something, and then they go to the restaurant and help support us, and they go to the bookstore and help support us, so I always used to say that a museum like this was like Britain in the days of the export drives. We had to get people in here in order to generate the funds to survive. Of course you can't say that about Britain anymore since oil was discovered in the North Sea.

SMITH: But do you personally care whether people come into the classical galleries?

VERMEULE: I love it, I love to see the classical galleries full.

SMITH: Okay. Some curators don't.

VERMEULE: No, we do here; we're not like the librarians who feel they exist only

to keep the books away from the people.

SMITH: Your collection must be larger than your exhibition space.

VERMEULE: Oh yes, and that's why we have a program of splendid exhibits in cooperation with other museums. If you go to Memphis, Tennessee, and go to the Brooks Museum of Art, you'll see a whole two-story room devoted to Greek vases, and they're all from this museum. They're beautifully installed and the installations were paid for by the very large Greek American community of Memphis. Different churches sponsored different cases; the woman's auxiliary of the Ahepa sponsored some, and the leadership of the American Hellenic Society sponsored others. I'm working on the catalog of the collection in the San Antonio Museum of Art, where we have wonderful things on loan. We're about to send out a loan collection to Boise, Idaho, where I've never been. They have a museum, and they want to borrow a collection of ours that was shown last winter at Vero Beach in Florida. And the Tampa Museum of Art, where Pamela Russell has just been succeeded as curator by a Harvard newly-minted Ph.D., Michael Bennett has quite a few things from our museum on loan. So when we can't show them, we try to place them in parts of the United States where there aren't major collections, where there's a drought.

SMITH: Do you rotate your permanent collection?

VERMEULE: Not really. We add to it, but then of course we have things that are all the time going off to major exhibitions. Students come here from the seventy-two

colleges and universities scattered around route 495 and out to Worcester and down to Providence, and they expect to see certain things. Montreal has a few examples of ancient art, but it's amazing the number of kids who come here from the Francophone universities of Québec because it's the nearest major collection of Greek, Etruscan and Roman art.

SMITH: I did want to ask you a little bit about your decision to retire and its relation to the ongoing fiscal crisis that this museum faces.

VERMEULE: Oh, it's very simple. Our director, given a mandate to balance the budget, looked at our department, though Mary Comstock runs it the way Calvin Coolidge ran the United States, and he saw that there were three top people, one curator and two associate curators, who had been here for a long time—because we're a happy and bonding group—whose salaries therefore were out of proportion to what he thought a small department would have. So he pretty much said, "One of you has got to go. " We didn't want John Herrmann to go; he's the future of the department and I didn't want Mary to go, so Mary and I agreed we'd both go on half salary and I'd retire at the end of the year, at which time she could go back on full salary and that would solve the crisis. There's since a group of people who have raised some money that we hope can be used to pay a replacement for the work that I don't really do, because I'm busy doing my own thing over in the corner. But somebody like Pamela Russell out there will fall heir to a full-time position funded by

the people who have donated the money in honor of yours truly, which is fine.

When you get to be seventy years and five months, it's time to throw in the towel, and not get in people's way, coming in here and demanding this and that, and trying to tell people what to do. The worst thing in the world is an old retiree who comes bumbling around and wastes people's time. They can tell me not to come here at all if they want, but I'd like to sit at my computer terminal here and only bother somebody if there's a crisis and a crash and I don't know what to do, and go on working on this encyclopaedia.

SMITH: How much longer do you have until you finish what looks like it's going to be a two-, possibly three-volume work, or maybe even four with the pictures?

VERMEULE: I've got the volumes of pictures up there. Well, I don't know. They'll probably carry me out on it, like the Spartan warrior returning with his shield, or *on* his shield.

SMITH: One other thing we have been asking the classicists concerns their relationship to collectors in Greece and Turkey. Have you and your wife had close relations with Madam [Dolly] Goulandris?

VERMEULE: Oh, yes. Dolly is a friend of ours. The collectors often come here, and there's a major collector in Istanbul who owns what you might call the combination of General Electric and two or three sort of appliance store chains all over Turkey. His last name is Aydin Koç, and he's a big collector, very pro-America.

His children have come to the United States and gone to Princeton, Harvard, Columbia, Michigan, so we have good vibes from them.

SMITH: And do you advise them, or is it simply a question of getting together socially and looking at what they've bought?

VERMEULE: Going to see what they've bought, yes. Generally, they have good advice. Mr. Koç is advised by a Turko-Armenian who has an art gallery in New York, but who spends a lot of time in his native Turkey. If people ask our advice, and sometimes they do, about bidding at an auction, we're happy to give it, and we certainly advise our local collectors.

SMITH: Of whom there must be a great number, here in the Boston area.

VERMEULE: I think the leading collector of ancient art is Peter Aldrich, who has a major real estate business and he owns the Sears Building in Chicago, the tallest building in the world. He has a standard poodle named Wrigley because he owns Wrigley field.

SMITH: And in between all this he owns a few Greek vases and sculptures?

VERMEULE: Yes, exactly.

[Tape IV, Side One]

VERMEULE: I was saying that it's really my colleagues, Mary Comstock, John Herrmann, Pamela Russell and Rebecca Reed, who do the installation and who work on text panels and on labels, which are a sheer joy to read. They're often crafted with

illustrations, if it's just a head of the complete statue. They put in hours on these panels and supplement them with gallery guides. That story I told you about the little boy that saw the dog upstairs and the little label, "Sphinx," well, that's a leftover of a bygone era. We're always honing and refining our methods of presentation. One of the examples that I find really superb, which Mary and John conceived as a result of all the interest in Alexander the Great, is the long case up in the Hellenistic gallery that has the coins of Alexander the Great and his successors, all the way to India. And then across the Roman court you have Roman gems, cameos, and intaglios that represent the important people of Rome and on this side you have the Romans of the late republic and the empire, through to that period which Raissa Calza said the wrong people referred to as "decadent, more decadent, and completely decadent."

So in the sense of "working in the trenches," I retired probably several years ago. But they all do a wonderful job, and I can only sit around and applaud. I think you should do an oral history with Dr. John Joseph Herrmann, Jr., the classmate of John Walsh at Philips Exeter and Yale, who himself has seen everything, from Rome in the 1960s to Boston in the 1990s. [He became Curator of Classical Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on July 1, 1996.] I think that his view of this world would in many senses dovetail with mine but would be very different, because I don't want you and the Getty oral [documentation] program to be taping nothing but old fogies, male or female. You don't have to be taping childhood geniuses; it isn't like

you are aged six and you can lead the New York Philharmonic, but I think people who are maybe ten or fifteen years younger than I am should be taped when they've had vastly different experiences, and they're still having active experiences, which I probably won't be having any more. End of sermon.

SMITH: I would agree. I have one last question, if I could impose on you, which has to do with your famous attitudes on women's rights and feminism, which people mentioned to me personally as I was preparing for this interview. From very early on you have been a defender of women and men doing the same work and so forth, and I wonder if you could just talk about how you came to your understanding of gender roles in the museum field and in the art history field?

VERMEULE: Oh, it has a long background. It began in World War II, and in particular the march from New Guinea through the Philippines, to Japan. The headquarters of our translators and interpreters outfit was staffed on the upper echelons by women, because, as *My Fair Lady* teaches us, women can speak much better than men, and living in other countries they pick up languages quicker than men. We have an example of an art dealer, a German noble lady who married a Scots art dealer; they've since divorced, and he couldn't pick up any languages worth a damn, but she picked up languages left, right, and center. So there I was, in an outfit where my commanding officer was a captain who was a woman, her commanding officer was a major who was a woman, her commanding officer was a lieutenant

colonel who was a woman, and then finally you'd get to General Willoughby, of MacArthur's staff. So I had great respect for these women and I knew just what they expected of me. For instance, on Saturday nights I was expected to go with Captain Murphy to the officer's club, and we would have a couple of dances together so that she would not feel unescorted, and then when her boyfriend arrived and cut in, I was free to disappear for the rest of the evening.

Of course in England I worked for powerful women: Dorothy Stroud of the Soane Museum and in Rome, Raissa Calza. When I went to teach at Bryn Mawr college I was in a world where men were definitely considered to be equal but less equal than women, because Bryn Mawr for years was full of very, very powerful women, like Mary Hamilton Swindler and Mabel Lang and others, like Katherine McBride, the president. They were powerful but capable and kindly, so I've never put up with this business of saying women are secondary or inferior.

When my father died, and my mother was left a widow, she was not impecunious, but she wanted to do something. After all, she'd been in the French Red Cross in the First World War, not sitting in an office in Paris but right up there in the aid stations of the second battle of the Somme and the Marne and whatnot. In World War II she ran the French canteen in New York, where soldiers and sailors who were in America came, particularly the French warships that came into New York harbor. But then after the war, when she was young, active, and a widow, she became a

director of Bergdorf Goodman's, the department store in New York, and helped to manage their expansion to the suburbs: Westchester, Long Island, and New Jersey. So I've seen women who are extremely capable and who command my respect unboundedly. One is Mary Comstock, right out there, a Bryn Mawr graduate, who I first met when I was a young instructor or assistant professor, and she came and took my course. I know a number of others who were at Bryn Mawr in those days who have gone on to great things, so I'm totally gender blind.

SMITH: What did you feel about the coming of feminism and its effects on the American university museums?

VERMEULE: Oh, I think it was wonderful. When my wife was appointed the Radcliffe Professor at Harvard, the actual title is the Samuel Zemurray, Jr., and Doris Zemurray Stone Radcliffe Professor. Well, Doris Zemurray Stone, a great anthropologist, just died within the last year. Samuel Zemurray, Jr., was one of those who dove his plane down the funnel of a Japanese cruiser at Midway and blew the cruiser up; that's why he's remembered. The father, Samuel Zemurray was a Jewish peddler who arrived in New Orleans with a pushcart, and instead of loading it up with buttons and bows, he loaded his pushcart up with bananas, and eventually became the owner of United Fruit—such a monopoly that bananas never have to advertise their company; it's just Chiquita banana. So Emily was known sometimes as the banana professor at Harvard.

One time we were walking up Brattle Street, and along came came President Nathan Pusey. At that time there were only two tenured women at Harvard, Emily and Cecilia Payne Gaposchkin, the great astronomer and sister of the late Humphrey Payne, the darling of British archaeology in Greece in the 1930s. Nate Pusey and Anne Pusey were coming one way, and Emily and I were coming the other way. Now Anne is a Bryn Mawr graduate and has a good view of feminism. She stopped, and we stopped, and she said, "Nate, I'd like you to meet the new—" and she tried to remember this long title to the chair, and she maybe stumbled and never got to Doris Zemurray Stone Radcliffe Professor. Pusey looked at Emily and said, "Yes, I know who she is. She's our new woman." And he spat it out like "damn yankee."

In those days women couldn't even eat in the faculty club dining room at Harvard. They had to eat in a sort of whitewashed and prettied little room in the back; that was as far as they were allowed to come. The faculty club dining room is now completely integrated, except there's one table that women don't go to, and that's the table where the great old gurus like [John Kenneth] Galbraith, the economist, sit. One woman named Janet Martin, who's an assistant professor in classics, decided during the beginning of the "new feminism" that she was going to integrate this table where the great old men of Harvard sat, so she sat down and ate lunch to their stony silence. Within a week she was out of her job at Harvard, and on her way to a job at a podunk teacher's college. She was out of there and far away. I think obviously it's

been necessary to have a look at the number of tenured and important women that are all over the academic world. There's Emily's classmate from Bryn Mawr, Hanna Holborn Gray, with her fifty-two honorary degrees, as Chancellor of Yale and then President of the University of Chicago—a splendid example of woman's leadership in the men's world. That's clichéd, but I think it's a battle that's been fought and won.

SMITH: Do you think feminism has added something to the field of archaeology?

VERMEULE: Well, it can be boring when it's carried to extremes, and my daughter [Emily Dickinson Blake Vermeule], who's teaching English at Yale, says, "Stop referring to every exhibition like *Pandora's Box* at the Walters Art Gallery that centers around women and women's issues in antiquity as 'gender shows'; start talking about them just as exhibitions." So there are still verbal worlds to be conquered, but then there are still people like the former superintendent of the Boston school system who took the job of superintendent of the school system in Alexandria, Virginia, and he missed being made chancellor of the New York school system because he forgot himself, and he forgot that it was 1993 or '94, or whenever this happened. One of the school committee in Fairfax County, Virginia, said something and Mr. Spillane looked at him and said, "If you disagree with us, boy, why don't you just go off and do something else?" And of course this was an American of African descent, and using the "B" word was not what one wants, so there will always be things to overcome.

SMITH: I think that I have asked all the things that I want to touch on; I wonder,

before we turn off the tape recorder, if there's anything that you wish to say or if there's something that's glaringly missing?

VERMEULE: I don't want to end on a rabble-rousing note, with the feeling that I've given a diatribe about women in the academic or museum world, but it is a subject on which one has strong feelings. I can't think of anything to add, except to say that I sometimes tell people that working in a museum is like playing in a great big sandbox. It's certainly fine when all the other children in the sandbox are manipulating their toys and enjoying your toys in equally pleasant fashion. It's only when it gets out of hand and one guy or gal starts grabbing for all the toys and beating everybody over the head that you realize the sandbox analogy may be true in all its aspects. So I thank you very much, dear Richard. I'm sure that you've found, after all these interviews, that people in classics and archaeology and that aspect of the museum world really do end up presenting a picture like the visually challenged Orientals in China and the great big pachyderm that's in front of them: you have to put the mosaic together. I can make any cliché in the world. Emily, my bride, once gave the commencement address at Smith College. She was so sick of hearing about the "race track of life," and "remember thy creator in the days of thy youth," that she gave a commencement address in which she strung together every cliché that had ever been used, and they loved it! Thank you.

SMITH: Thank you.

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